

THE CAUSES OF THE WORLD WAR

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THE CAUSES OF THE WORLD WAR

AN HISTORICAL SUMMARY

by

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Authorized Translation

From the French

by

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PREFACE

ON the 28th of June 1914 the nephew and heir presumptive to the Emperor Francis Joseph, Archduke Francis Ferdinand, was assassinated by a young Herzegovinian student at Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia-Herzegovina; Austrian territory which had been annexed by the Dual Monarchy in 1908.

On the following 28th of July the Austro-Hungarian Government declared war on Serbia. On the 1st of August the German Government, Austria's ally, declared war on Russia; and the next day the German army invaded the neutral territory of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, while the German Minister in Brussels presented to the Government of Belgium (also a neutral country) an ultimatum which had been drafted as early as the 26th of July. On the 3rd of August the German Government declared war on France, the ally of Russia; on the 4th of August the German Army invaded Belgian territory, and on the same day the British Government declared war on Germany. On the 3rd and 4th of August respectively Italy and Rumania, the allies of Germany and Austria, announced their decision to remain neutral and to take no part in the European conflict which had thus broken out. Such is the bare sequence of events which took place in the historic few days known as "the crisis of 1914."

The object of this book, which is deliberately set down in plain conversational language, without any pretension to literary polish, is to give a brief account of the events of the period reduced to their essentials; to exhibit in

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broad outlines their sequence, inter-relationship, and general colour, and to present the quality of the atmosphere in which they took place.

The reader will find, so far as the text itself is concerned, no critical apparatus, no footnotes, no discussion of authorities, nor any of the paraphernalia which usually characterizes learned works. But, as it is the essence of the historical method to admit no statement simply on the authority of the person who makes it, whether he be modest student or famous author, it is essential that the reader of this summary should be able to keep a proper check on its contents; and I have therefore added an appendix containing all the references necessary for the verification of the facts, together with a list of the major publications and principal historical works which are indispensable to any study of the subject.

I believe that such a summary may prove of value. It is naturally addressed not so much to specialists as to the general reader, who would be overwhelmed or discouraged by the mass of official documents, special propaganda, legal commentaries, and technical historical works which have been published on the subject; for the number of texts and other works to which reference is needed runs into several tens of thousands.

The reader will find here no opinions for which the author himself is responsible. The only personal opinions included in the narrative are those of two German writers, Eugen Fischer and Hermann Lutz. Their version of the facts does not correspond at all points with that which I have endeavoured to present, in particular so far as it concerns the significance of the Russian mobilization and the apportionment of so-called "respon-

Preface

sibility" among the various European Governments; but it seems to me all the more valuable to present their views, inasmuch as these two writers, each deeply and sincerely patriotic, were members of the committee set up by the German Reichstag to investigate the causes of the war, and carried out their task with the utmost possible historical exactitude. Thus their views offer the soundest guarantee of sincerity, and no national susceptibility or scruple can be offended by what they have to say.

It will be noted that the text contains many words, phrases, and extracts of some length placed between quotation marks. I have adopted this procedure in order to devote the utmost possible space to authentic documentary evidence; the facts are allowed to speak for themselves, as they appear from the German and Austrian sources upon which I have almost exclusively relied.

FOREWORD TO THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION

THERE is some slight variation between this translation and the original French text.

1. Some printers' errors have been corrected, some quotations which were previously incomplete or imperfect have been amended, and two dates which had been wrongly cited are here set right. But none of these alterations (about 40) in the original French text of 218 pages modify the work in any way or touch upon any essential point.

2. In the French text the references and notes at the end of the book refer the reader for the most part to the French translation of official and other sources; but it has in the present volume seemed more convenient to give the references to the documents in their original form.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

GERMANY

The Emperor WILLIAM II (the Kaiser).
BETHMANN-HOLLWEG, Chancellor and Prime Minister of Prussia.
JAGOW, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (the Wilhelmstrasse).
ZIMMERMANN, Under-Secretary of State.
LICHNOWSKY, Ambassador in London.
POURTALES, Ambassador in St. Petersburg.
VON SHOEN, Ambassador in Paris.
TSCHIRSCHKY, Ambassador in Vienna.
VON MOLTKE, Chief of the General Staff.
FALKENHAYN, Minister for War.

AUSTRIA-HUNGARY

The Emperor FRANCIS JOSEPH.
BERCHTOLD, Minister for Foreign Affairs (the Ballplatz).
TISZA, Prime Minister of Hungary.
HOYOS, Personal Private Secretary to BERCHTOLD.
GIESL, Minister in Belgrade.
SZÁPÁRY, Ambassador in St. Petersburg.
SZÖGYÉNY, Ambassador in Berlin.
Conrad VON HÖTZENDORF, Chief of the General Staff.

GREAT BRITAIN

King GEORGE V.
ASQUITH, Prime Minister.
Sir Edward GREY, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (the Foreign Office).
Sir Eyre CROWE, Assistant-Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.
Sir Arthur NICOLSON, Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

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Sir Francis BERTIE, Ambassador in Paris.
Sir George BUCHANAN, Ambassador in St. Petersburg.
Sir Edward GOSCHEN, Ambassador in Berlin.

FRANCE

POINCARÉ, President of the Republic.
VIVIANI, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs
(the Quai d'Orsay).
BIENVENU-MARTIN, Keeper of the Seals, and Minister for
Foreign Affairs *ad interim* during POINCARÉ's and VIVIANI's
visit to St. Petersburg.
DE MARGERIE, Director of Political Affairs at the Quai d'Orsay.
BERTHELOT, Assistant-Director.
CAMBON (Jules), Ambassador in Berlin.
CAMBON (Paul), Ambassador in London.
PALÉOLOGUE, Ambassador in St. Petersburg.
MESSIMY, Minister for War.
General JOFFRE, Chief of the General Staff.

RUSSIA

The Czar NICHOLAS II.
SAZONOV, Minister for Foreign Affairs.
BENCKENDORFF, Ambassador in London.
ISVOLSKY, Ambassador in Paris.
SOUKHOMLINOV, Minister for War.
JANUSKHEVITCH, Chief of the General Staff.
DOBROROLSKI, Chief of the Mobilization Service.

BELGIUM

King ALBERT I.

SERBIA

King PETER I.
The Crown Prince ALEXANDER, Regent.
PACHITCH, Prime Minister.

THE CAUSES OF THE WORLD WAR

CHAPTER I

AUSTRO-SERBIAN ANTAGONISM BEFORE 1914

THE events that followed the outrage at Sarajevo in the course of the summer of 1914 were closely connected with the conflicting aims of Austria and Serbia; and the tension between these two countries was again only one aspect of the duel between pan-Germanism and pan-Slavism which had been growing more and more acute for the past ten years.

Austro-Hungarian Hostility to the Creation of Yugoslavia

After being successively ousted from Italy and Germany as a result of the nationalist movements which marked the nineteenth century, Austria sought a new political orientation. Constituted a Dual Monarchy together with Hungary (1867), and now become an essentially Danubian State, she made friends with the young German Empire, hoping through this support to find compensation in the Balkans for the power which she had lost elsewhere. As early as 1878, at the Congress of Berlin, Austria obtained an important advantage: she was entrusted with the administration of Bosnia-Herzegovina, which had rebelled against Turkish domination; and was thus favourably placed in view of the approaching break-up of the Ottoman Empire. But at the same time she struck at the very heart of the young Yugoslav nationality which

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was in course of resurrection, and came into conflict with the South Slavs.

It must be remembered that Jugoslavia was at this time still no more than an imaginary nation, split up politically into several groups. Two among them, Serbia and Montenegro, though freed from the Turkish yoke remained impotent in their autonomy, isolated as they were from each other by the *sandjak* of Novi-Bazar which was garrisoned by Austria and thrust like an "iron wedge" into Old Serbia herself. To the west, Bosnia-Herzegovina formed a third fragment, occupied and administered by Austria-Hungary. Further west again, between the Drave and the Adriatic, were to be found the Croats and the Dalmatians, who while they differed from the Serbs in religion remained in racial and linguistic communion with them.

All these South Slavs were animated by a common aspiration towards liberty and unity. They dreamed of re-establishing the old Empire of Dushan the Great which had been destroyed by the Turks, they hated their Austrian and Hungarian oppressors; and Russia, a Power which was the natural patron of all Slavs, interested herself in their claims.

What was the policy of Vienna and Budapest towards them? Since the compromise of 1867, the Slav question had become, internally as well as externally, one of the gravest problems with which the Dual Monarchy had to deal. From the internal point of view, despite the ethnical proportion of Slav elements—who, in the north as well as in the south, made up nearly half the population of the Empire—Hungary was particularly hostile to the idea of a Triple Monarchy. The South Slavs were hated,

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despised, and persecuted, and from the external point of view, the example of Germany and Italy aroused fears lest a united Yugoslav State should be formed around the Serbian nucleus, to the detriment of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, thus forming an obstacle to that Monarchy's aspirations in the region of the Lower Danube and towards Salonika.

For a quarter of a century after the Treaty of Berlin Austria managed to keep Serbia in a condition of tutelage through the medium of her Sovereign, who was entirely under Austrian influence. But in 1903 a national reaction led to a bloody dynastic upheaval; and the reigning family of Obrenovitch was replaced by that of Karageorgevitch. Henceforth the Dual Monarchy was to take advantage of every occasion which seemed propitious to adopt a more and more aggressive attitude and to thwart the realization of Yugoslavian aspirations.

The Annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina

Her first opportunity was provided by the Turkish crisis of 1908, which occurred on the morrow of the Russo-Japanese war. Russia had emerged from it weakened and in no position to take strong measures abroad, and Austria decided to transform her provisional occupation of Bosnia-Herzegovina into definite annexation.

She succeeded in doing so without having to resort to force. It sufficed for the Emperor Francis Joseph to issue a proclamation, in time of peace, to the effect that he was fulfilling the desires of the populations under Austrian occupation by placing them under the effective sovereignty of his Crown. Goaded to wrath by this violation of the Treaty of Berlin, Serbia proposed to offer active resis-

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tance; she mobilized her army, counting on the support of Russia; but the Czar's Government felt itself unable to back the Belgrade Government by force of arms and England and France despite their close relations with Russia were not disposed to engage in a conflict over the Balkans. On the other hand Aehrenthal, the Austro-Hungarian Minister for Foreign Affairs, was strongly supported by Bülow, the German Chancellor, who went so far as to send an ultimatum to the Cabinet in St. Petersburg, calling upon it to accept the change which had taken place in the situation laid down by the Treaty of Berlin.

Thus supported, Aehrenthal succeeded in imposing a humiliation on Serbia, and the Powers—desirous above all to avoid more serious complications—were consenting parties. He compelled Serbia to make a solemn declaration (March 31, 1909) "that her rights were not affected by the *fait accompli*," and that she undertook to live henceforth "as a good neighbour" to Austria. William II, congratulating Francis Joseph on the success of his policy, predicted that the annexation would be a "blessing" to Bosnia-Herzegovina. But Serbia was never to reconcile herself to what she regarded as a "mutilation"; and the German Minister in Belgrade himself wrote, at the beginning of July 1914, that the capitulation of 1908-9 "inflicted on the Serbian soul a wound which has never healed."(1)

The Agram and Friedjung Trials

The Serbian people were to retain no less bitter a memory of another event which occurred at the time of the annexation: the prosecution of leaders and members of

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the Serbo-Croat coalition which had been carrying on successful propaganda in favour of the union of all South Slav elements. Thirty-one of them, accused of high treason and affiliation with Serbian secret societies, were condemned by the Agram court to hard labour after a charge and trial of so scandalous a nature that they had subsequently to be pardoned. The documents on which the prosecution had relied to justify the charge of conspiracy with the complicity of Serbia against the Austro-Hungarian State were afterwards utilized by the historian Friedjung, whom the leaders of the coalition brought to justice in their turn; and it has been established by the Czech professor Masaryk that these documents were forged at the Austrian legation in Belgrade.

The revelation of these forgeries provided one more element to increase the Serbian hatred of Vienna; and also made a great stir abroad, to the moral detriment of the Dual Monarchy, the effects of which still persisted in the month of June 1914.(2)

The Balkan Wars

The Balkan wars of 1912 and 1913 which followed the Italo-Turkish war of 1911, deepened Serbia's resentment against Austria. In 1912, when the armies of the Balkan League, formed (under the auspices of Russia) between Serbia, Montenegro, Bulgaria, and Greece, had defeated the Sultan's army, captured Macedonia, and reached the gates of Constantinople, Austria decided to mobilize against Serbia in order to prevent her from reaping the fruits of her victories. She opposed the acquisition by the Serbian kingdom of a port of access and a naval base on the Adriatic; she sought to thwart its development

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by the creation of an autonomous Albania, which would constitute a barrier between Serbia and the sea; and she refused to let Montenegro establish herself on the Albanian coast.

But it was not only Serbia that Austria was prepared to combat by force of arms. Believing that Russia might come to Serbia's assistance, she also mobilized in the frontier province of Galicia. The moderating influence of all the Powers however averted any outbreak of war, at the price of the Czar's acquiescence in the Austrian demands: no access by Serbia to the Adriatic, and the creation of an Albanian State.

During the second Balkan war—that of Bulgaria (supported by Vienna) against her allies of the year before—the Serbian victories again aroused the anxiety of Austria, who once more contemplated attacking her; but Italy and Germany refused to make themselves her accomplices, and by the Treaty of Bucharest (August 10, 1913) Serbian territory was largely increased in Macedonia, while Montenegro received an outlet to the sea.

Two months later, however, an ultimatum from Vienna compelled Serbia to evacuate the strategic points which she had just occupied on the Albanian frontier. Germany, who had previously united her efforts with those of the other Powers in the interests of peace, now approved this policy on the part of Vienna and assured Austria that she could count "absolutely" upon her support. But the Serbs, proud of their brilliant military success, retained keen resentment against Austria-Hungary, who had showed herself so pitilessly hostile to their national rebirth; and the Government of Vienna, to which the Treaty of Bucharest was a "bitter blow," could not resign

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itself to the consequences of that settlement. It could not accept either the increase of Russian prestige in the Balkans, or the expansion of the kingdom of Serbia—towards which the aspirations of the South Slav subjects of the Dual Monarchy, inspired by the victories of their brethren across the frontier, would inevitably turn more and more. Henceforth the aim of Vienna was a revision of the treaty.(3)

The Violence of Austrian Feeling against Serbia

Desire for revenge was strongly felt in Austrian military circles, and it is ceaselessly expressed in the conversation, letters, and memoirs of Conrad von Hötzendorf, the Chief of the General Staff. His favourite theme was that "any Balkan policy" ought to aim at the annexation of Serbia, an adversary whom he qualified as "aggressive" and "inexorable." There was no other way of salvation in the "struggle for existence" to which Austria was condemned by the South Slav danger. A fortnight after the Treaty of Bucharest, this main objective—the *leit-motiv* of all his policy—is strongly expressed to Berchtold, Aerenthal's successor; he tells him that "to attain the final goal, it would be worth while to assume the responsibility of a war, with all its consequences."(4) It has been reckoned that he proposed to enter into armed conflict with Serbia twenty-five times between January 1, 1913, and June 1, 1914.(5)

Conrad's ideas, and what was called his "fanaticism for war," gradually penetrated into non-military official circles, and strengthened their hatred and contempt for the Serbs, those "cowards," "savages," "bandits," "vermin." The Austro-Hungarian authorities in Bosnia-

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Herzegovina earnestly demanded the punishment of "Serbian provocation" by war, which would free the Monarchy from danger and maintain it in the rank of a Great Power.(6)

The Expected Intervention of Russia in the Event of Aggression against Serbia

When Conrad referred to "all the consequences" of a war, he implied the intervention of Russia. The Government of Vienna—like all other Governments—knew that Russia could not abandon Serbia to her fate if she were attacked with a view to her dismemberment, and that in such a case a general war would break out. Conrad himself declared "it is inevitable that the intervention of Russia against the Dual Monarchy should also provoke the intervention of Germany against Russia, and thereby also the intervention of France against Germany." Such a result was, indeed, unavoidable in view of the obligations of the Austro-German Alliance on the one hand and the Franco-Russian Alliance on the other.(7)

It was precisely to ward off this terrible threat that the Powers of the *Entente*, with the firm support of Germany, had hitherto prevented Vienna from committing any irreparable act.

Anxiety in Europe inspired by German Policy

A mere bird's-eye view of the state of Europe enables us to understand that an armed conflict between Austria and Serbia might well lead to a general conflagration, for during the past twelve years political tension between the

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principal Powers had been growing, and armaments had undergone a significant development.

From 1902 onwards the evolution of Italian and British policy had modified the respective positions of the two groups which, during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, had formed the Triple Alliance and the Dual Alliance. On the one hand, Italy had made friends with France and renounced the provocative attitude towards that Power which she had taken up under Crispi; her presence in the Triple Alliance had lost any aggressive character. On the other hand, England, restive under the rebuffs she encountered in Berlin at the hands of William II, and anxious about the manifestations of the new German policy—the *Welt-politik* or world policy which threatened her own commercial and maritime supremacy—had been led to make friends with France and settle their mutual interests by an *Entente Cordiale* (1904).

Germany took offence at this twofold approach to France which, following upon the Franco-Russian Alliance, shook the foundations of the Bismarckian edifice. Regarding the Franco-English *Entente* as a threat to herself, she tried to break it by a preliminary "trial of strength," and took advantage of the reverses which had left Russia weakened through her war with Japan in order to intervene in Morocco. Europe, in 1905, came within a hair's-breadth of a conflagration.

In order to maintain peace, France accepted the humiliation of sacrificing Delcassé, the Minister who had negotiated the *Entente Cordiale*. But the Conference of Algeciras, assembled at the request of the Wilhelmstrasse, though it lulled the storm served only to confirm the

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new positions on the European chessboard; and Germany remained dissatisfied with the comparative failure of her intervention.

Three years later thanks to the Turkish revolution, Austria in her turn, vigorously supported by Germany, made a fresh trial of strength—this time against Russia—by annexing Bosnia-Herzegovina. A Russian capitulation crowned her effort, by which the Slav soul was humiliated and an open abscess left in the body of Europe (1908-9).

Meanwhile England was making friends with Russia; and Germany, seeing an Anglo-Franco-Russian Triple *Entente* taking shape just at the very moment when Italy seemed to be detaching herself from the Triple Alliance, was obsessed by the idea of "encirclement," the initiative for which she attributed to Paris and London. Two years had barely passed before the Wilhelmstrasse brought the conflict of 1905 to life again by a fresh demonstration in Morocco, and once more tried to test the strength of the *Entente*, at the risk of endangering peace. The crisis (1911) was intense, and it ended in a laborious compromise, leaving an atmosphere of storm over Europe.

But though England in this crisis had from the very first moment taken up a position in close contact with France she nevertheless remained ready to seek an understanding with Germany, in order to put a stop to the maritime rivalry which for the past fifteen years had been threatening the peace of the world. This was the object of the mission of Lord Haldane, Secretary of State for War, to Berlin after the events of 1911. But the mission failed, because William II and his advisers sought to tie England's hands and made any understanding between England and Germany conditional upon a pro-

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mise of British neutrality in the event of a Franco-German war.

It was at this moment that the Balkan war broke out: a final crisis which still further aggravated the general situation by suddenly reopening the question of the break-up of Turkey, and at the same time reawakening the antagonism between the Austro-German Powers and Russia.

At a period when the circumstances of the Balkan war gave grounds for fear of a conflict between Austria and Russia, the Franco-English agreement of November 1912 was negotiated. There was no question either of an alliance, or even of an absolute promise of military support: all that England undertook, through the medium of a simple exchange of letters between the two Foreign Offices, was that if the international situation should become threatening the two countries should proceed to a common examination of it, and decide whether there were ground for carrying into effect the technical arrangements which had already been prepared in cooperation between the two General Staffs—which arrangements did not however impose any direct obligation upon the Government of either country. The mainspring of British policy was the necessity of resisting the growing naval power of Germany: since an understanding with Germany had proved impossible England also strengthened her fleet, and the other European Great Powers also began to participate in the "armaments race."

So far as land forces were concerned, the initiative was similarly taken by Germany in the course of the years 1911 and 1912. Her greatest effort was made in the first half of 1913, when a law which considerably

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increased her army was debated and passed in the Reichstag; and it was as a reply to this that France once more altered her system of military service, reverting to the period of service for three years which she had recently abandoned. Russia also drafted a programme for strengthening her army, improving its equipment and increasing the efficiency of her railway system; but this programme was not to be completed until 1917. There was even a project for a naval understanding between Russia and England, but this also had not yet been carried into effect by the middle of the year 1914.

Germany convinced of the Peaceful Intentions of the Entente

Thus all Europe lived in a state of anxiety, and it was felt that the general peace might be broken at any moment. But at the same time the situation presented this peculiar characteristic: Germany, whose political activity was so generally disquieting, was perfectly aware that the intentions of the *Entente* were peaceful.

There are numerous testimonies to this effect, and one of the most striking is a letter from Moltke to Conrad. In the month of March 1914 Moltke wrote: "I do not believe that Russia is seeking, or will provoke in the near future, any cause of war against Austria, or—what comes to the same thing—against Germany, and there is even less reason to anticipate an aggressive attitude on the part of France than on the part of Russia." Moltke was convinced that, even though France was applying herself to strengthening her ally from the military point of view, "she would have difficulty in forcing her at short notice into a war against the Triple Alliance": finally, he em-

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phasized the position of prudent reserve maintained by England.(8)

Another particularly notable testimony is that of the Austrian ambassador in Paris, a few days before the assassination of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand. After a conversation with President Poincaré about Albania in the presence of the Italian ambassador, he wrote to his Government that clearly the French statesman "desires to avoid complications as far as possible."(9)

The German Fear of "Encirclement"

But the Emperor William II, the German General Staff, and the Wilhelmstrasse nevertheless believed themselves to be the victims of a plot on the part of the Powers against German security. They attributed to them, as we have seen, a desire to "encircle" Germany and prevent—as they expressed it—a great nation from obtaining "her place in the sun." This idea became daily more deeply rooted in their minds. William II received the American, Colonel House, the friend and representative of President Wilson, at Potsdam in June 1914, and made this statement to him: "Germany has been poor, she is now growing rich, and a few more years of peace will make her so. She is menaced on every side. The bayonets of Europe are directed at her."(10)

The Aggressive Spirit in German High Circles

At the moment when he used such language it was already several months since the Emperor, and with him the chief personnel of the Wilhelmstrasse, had modified the pacific point of view which they had adopted during

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the late Balkan wars. They now all contemplated the possibility of a general conflict between the Triple Alliance and the Triple *Entente*, whose point of departure would be military action by Austria against Serbia. They felt that their Viennese ally could not remain in the state of weakness and inferiority to which the Treaty of Bucharest had reduced it, and that Austrian policy should be directed to the earliest possible recovery of that prestige which had been lost to Russia in the Balkans.

During the autumn of 1913 William II repeatedly expressed his opinion in the clearest possible terms. To Conrad he declared that, in his view, "the measure is full": he recommended energetic action against Serbia and promised his full support. "You may count upon my support. The other (Powers) are not ready, and will make no effort to prevent your action. You must be in Belgrade in a couple of days. I have always been a partisan of peace, but there are limits to such a policy: I have read much about war, and I know what it means, but none the less a situation finally arises in which a Great Power can no longer remain a spectator but must draw the sword." (11)

A few days later he said much the same thing to Berchtold, the Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs. He thought it necessary to crush the Pan-Slavist menace, and felt that "the Slavs are not born to command, but to obey. They must be reminded of the fact; and if they think that salvation will come to them from Belgrade, they must be shown that they are wrong." Serbia should be "tamed," and compelled to put her army "at Austria's disposal," so that the security of the Dual Monarchy might be guaranteed, and he added: "If the Serbs refuse, then force must be applied; for when His Majesty the

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Emperor Francis Joseph commands the Serbian Government must obey; and if it does not, Belgrade must be bombarded until His Majesty's demands are carried out." William II promised to support any action by Austria, and—accompanying his words with gesture—he declared himself "ready to draw the sword at any moment if the advance (of Austria) requires it." He also confided to Berchtold that Russia was incapable of waging war for the next six years, and that therefore "there need be no anxiety so far as she is concerned." (12)

Scarcely had this conversation with Berchtold taken place than the Kaiser dumbfounded and alarmed the King of the Belgians by revealing the full scope of his hopes and plans. He declared a war "inevitable and near at hand"—a victorious war against France, still obstinately clinging to the idea of revenge and recalcitrant to any understanding with Germany. Moltke himself at the same time talked in the same sense.

The German Emperor was therefore clearly won over to the idea of a war which would break out in the Balkans, and at once spread to the whole of Europe. (13)

The Designs of the German General Staff against the Neutrality of Belgium

It is difficult to say to just what influence this change of mind on the Kaiser's part was due. Kiderlen Wächter, the German Minister for Foreign Affairs, attributed it to the bellicose advice which was given to William II by his own family. (14) But the influence of his military entourage was undoubtedly very strong. The German General Staff had long since drafted the following plan of campaign, which was the work of Count Schlieffen:

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in case of a conflict with France, Germany would attack through Holland and Belgium—that is to say, through two neutral countries. This plan, drafted as early as 1899, had been modified to some extent by its author in 1904: in that year Schlieffen would even have liked Bülow to take advantage of the political situation of the *Entente* Powers in order to pick a quarrel with France at a moment when she was isolated and could count neither upon England, weakened by the Boer War, nor upon Russia, engaged in her conflict with Japan. He pressed the Chancellor to exploit the Moroccan question with this object in view.(15) William II was aware of the Schlieffen plan and in favour of it; for in 1905, indignant over the visit of a British squadron to the Baltic Sea and contemplating the possibility of war with Great Britain, he proposed that an ultimatum should at once be sent to Belgium and France, summoning them, within a period of six hours, to take sides for or against Germany. “And we ought to invade Belgium,” he added, “whatever her declaration may be.” But Bülow thought it wiser not to give Belgium any hint of Germany’s intentions; for she would be sure to fortify herself against Germany and warn France, who would take steps to meet such a possible danger.(16)

When he became Chief of the General Staff, Moltke adopted some of his predecessor’s ideas. At the beginning of the year 1913 his colleague, General Ludendorff, foresaw a struggle on the French front and the Russian front at one and the same time, and the following guiding principles were then formulated: “Stand on the defensive on one side with weak forces, so as to be in a position to take the offensive on the other side. This latter side can

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never be other than the French side. There a rapid decision may be expected, whereas an offensive campaign on the Russian side would be endless. But, in order to act on the offensive against France, it will be necessary to violate the neutrality of Belgium.”(17)

The idea that the European situation and the unpreparedness of the *Entente* in the event of an outbreak of war created favourable circumstances which should be turned to immediate account, was expressed to Conrad by Moltke on May 12, 1914. Two months earlier, as we have seen, Moltke had admitted the peaceful intentions of Russia, France, and England. “If we delay any longer,” he now wrote to his Austrian colleague, “the chances of success will be diminished.” Moltke confided to Conrad his hopes of “making an end of France six weeks after the opening of hostilities, or at least being far enough advanced to transfer the bulk of our forces to the Eastern front.”(18) A few days later (June 1, 1914) he made similar statements to Baron von Eckardstein, the former German *chargé d'affaires* in London.(19)

These testimonies, emanating from the most highly qualified personages, bear witness to a continuity of outlook and objective directed towards early military action to be initiated by the Central Empires. Since these plans were known to the other Powers, or at least suspected by them, they judged the state of mind of the German Government to be highly dangerous for the preservation of peace; for acts of intimidation had already been observed and the German Government had ordered the construction of strategic railways close up to the Belgian frontier.

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A Public Opinion in Germany aroused in favour of War
German public opinion, strongly influenced during the past few years by Pan-Germanic propaganda, was also becoming accustomed to the idea of war, and the great popular success of the works of certain military writers shortly before the events of 1914 had a profound effect; for example, *Germany and the Next War*, by General von Bernhardi, the first edition of which appeared in 1911. Another book, later in date (March 1914), by Colonel Frobenius, recommended Germany to seize "the hour of destiny," and take aggressive action before Russia and France, urged on by England, had finished their preparations; and before they were in a position to engage in a decisive struggle against peaceful Germany.

"Never," declared Colonel Frobenius, "has any people been attacked more unjustly than Germany will be in the next war. Never has any nation given such proof of patience and long suffering as Germany has given during the last few years, at a time when jealousy has sought to provoke her from all directions. If there were ever a people, if there were ever a Sovereign, who showed a firm desire to be a citadel of peace, that country is Germany and that Sovereign is the Emperor William II." (20)
This widely accepted thesis—that of a preventive war against sworn enemies, but enemies as yet insufficiently prepared for action—was to triumph in the month of July 1914.

One may sum up the foregoing preliminary argument as follows: there was a powder-magazine in the Balkans, which would inevitably explode at a touch; and to go near it with a match must be the deliberate provocation of a general war. But strained though the relations

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between the two opposing groups of Powers might be, it was possible, given good will, to avoid setting fire to the magazine; and the historians least unfavourable to German military propaganda recognize that war was not bound to break out through circumstances beyond the power of human control in 1914, any more than in 1909 or 1911.(21)

If that immense conflagration took place, there could be no avoiding the conclusion that somebody had deliberately fired the powder-magazine.

CHAPTER II

THE SARAJEVO OUTRAGE

The Assassination

ON Sunday the 28th of June, 1914, the Archduke Francis Ferdinand, who was taking part in the Austrian manœuvres in the neighbourhood of Sarajevo as inspector of the army, paid a State visit to the capital of Bosnia together with his morganatic wife, Sophia Chotek, Duchess of Hohenberg. The visit had been announced some time beforehand.

It was the *Vidov Dan* (the feast-day of St. Vitus), the anniversary of the battle of Kossovo, on which, five hundred and twenty-five years earlier, had been staked the fate of the old independent kingdom of Great Serbia. In that battle its independence was destroyed by the Turks. This anniversary, hitherto regarded as a day of patriotic mourning, was to be celebrated as a festival now that the wars of 1912 and 1913 had restored the prestige of victorious Serbia, and the population of Bosnia, who had remained loyal to Serbia despite their annexation by Austria, observed the *Vidov Dan* in the same way as the sister population of the Serbian kingdom.

The official visit of the Archduke and his wife, paid on a day when nationalist enthusiasm was bound to be particularly excited, was obviously not without its dangers. These dangers were the more unmistakable in that, as early as June 5th, the Serbian Minister in Vienna had called on the Austro-Hungarian Minister in charge of Bosniak-Herzegovinian affairs for the purpose of con-

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fiding to him his fears lest patriotic passion should lead to some deplorable incident. "Among the young men in the army," he said, "there may be one who will load his rifle or his revolver with live cartridge instead of blank. He may fire, and his bullet may strike the man who gives the order to fire." (1) But the Austro-Hungarian Minister attached no importance to this communication, which he perhaps regarded as merely a vague pessimistic hypothesis, and no action was taken.

The event which had been thus discreetly foreshadowed as possible took place, but in different conditions from those contemplated by the Serbian Minister. The Archduke, in full-dress uniform, and his wife, accompanied by General Potiorek, Governor of Bosnia-Herzegovina, drove in a motor-car through the sunny city followed by other cars carrying their suite and the local authorities. Crowds of spectators thronged the streets, uncontrolled by any cordon of troops, as had been the case on the occasion of the Emperor Francis Joseph's visit in 1910.

While the procession was on its way to the Town Hall a bomb was flung at the Archduke's car. It missed its aim, but burst as it struck the ground and wounded several civilian spectators, as well as an officer in the car following the Archduke's. After the reception at the Town Hall and before the luncheon which was to be given at the Konak, the Governor's residence, the Archduke decided to pay a visit to the wounded officer at the hospital. Just as his car slowed down, owing to some mistake on the part of the driver, two revolver shots were fired, mortally wounding both the Archduke and his wife.

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The authors of the twofold outrage, who were arrested on the spot, were two very young men named Tcha-brinovitch and Printsip, the latter the actual assassin. They had been born in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and were therefore Austro-Hungarian subjects. They admitted that they had come from Belgrade, where they had obtained their weapons, and declared that their intention to kill the Archduke, far from being a sudden one, dated back several weeks.

Austria bent on a War of Revenge against Serbia

Immediately after the event at Sarajevo—which had been preceded by several other outrages in the course of the last few years—Serbia herself was called to the bar by Austria to answer for her “undeniable moral complicity.”(2)

The Austrian Government authorities were of the opinion that strong measures should at once be taken; General Potiorek expressed the view that only “energetic action in the sphere of foreign policy” would enable “tranquillity and a normal situation to be re-established in Bosnia-Herzegovina.”(3) Von Storck, the Austro-Hungarian counsellor at the Belgrade legation, declared categorically that this favourable opportunity ought to be seized for striking at the Serbian kingdom “a blow which will annihilate it.” Should Austria-Hungary, he asked, “lend herself any longer to this Serbian policy of alternate open attacks and cowardly pinpricks; is it not better to seize the first pretext for a quarrel, before Serbia becomes a military factor in the European sense of the word?”(4) The same opinion prevailed at the Ballplatz in Vienna, the seat of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs: the Serbian menace must be crushed.

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In this connection the decisive testimony is that of the originator of the Austro-Hungarian policy, Count Berchtold. He did not content himself with branding Belgrade as the centre whence the authors of the outrage had received their inspiration; he informed Tisza, the Hungarian Prime Minister, of "his intention to make the atrocious crime at Sarajevo the occasion of a settlement of accounts with Serbia." (5)

But it was necessary to keep this intention a secret, and Berchtold gave instructions to von Storck in this sense; for the Austrian diplomat was showing so much zeal that his chief was obliged to bid him be more circumspect. "We have no interest for the moment," Berchtold wrote, "in giving Belgrade the impression that you have received orders to take advantage of the matter in question, or any similar matter, in order to force the pace. You will therefore be good enough to execute the orders you receive, so far as the Serbian Government is concerned, with the greatest calm and the greatest objectivity; but at the same time in such a way that any belated pretext of misunderstanding, or any denial of the receipt of a communication, be made impossible on the part of that Government. When the investigation is complete, then will be the moment to make up our minds about the political consequences which we should derive from it." (6)

Failure to prove Serbian Complicity

Since this was the state of mind of those who directed Austrian policy, they were naturally anxious to be able to establish proof of Serbian connivance in the assassination; but this they failed to do.

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It was certain that some Serbian officers and officials had assisted the conspirators more or less directly; the conspirators had frequented Slav revolutionary circles in Belgrade, and had also been in contact there with members of an association known as *Narodna Odbrana* (National Defence), which worked for the propagation of the ideal of Yugoslav unity in the annexed province as well as in Serbia. The complicity of a man of terrific energy, Colonel Dimitrievich, attached to the General Staff as head of the secret service, and a member of a secret society, terrorist in character, known as the "Black Hand," is now uncontested. Over this society, which played a very large part in the preparations for the Sarajevo crime, Dimitrievich and his lieutenants had the greatest influence.

But the results of the investigation, carried out immediately after the outrage, compelled the Austrian authorities to recognize the innocence of official Serbia. The conclusion of the report of Counsellor von Wiesner, who carried out inquiries on the spot, may be quoted textually:(7) "Complicity on the part of the Serbian Government in the crime itself in its preparation, or in the provision of weapons, is in no way proved, or even to be presumed; and there are furthermore reasons which must lead one to regard such complicity as impossible."

All the incriminating evidence which could be brought against the Serbian Government was the favour shown by it towards the propaganda for Serbo-Croat unity, and even so it was with great reserve that von Wiesner summed up in this respect. He confined himself to saying that "documents dating from before the outrage contain no proof that the Serbian Government encouraged this

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propaganda. On the other hand, there are some documents—rather undependable, it is true, but still sufficient—to show that this movement, originating in Serbia and carried on by associations, was tolerated by the Serbian Government.” In other words, the conclusion of the official investigator was that no direct complicity and no official encouragement of propaganda could be proved against the Serbian Government: nothing more definite than toleration of the anti-Austrian movement.

A similar reduction of the scope of the accusation against Serbia also emerges from the declarations of the judge, Leo Pfeffer, entrusted with the preliminary inquiry into the outrage, which took place in the month of October 1914. He put official Serbia formally out of court, saying that she knew nothing about the intentions of the accused, qualifying the accusation brought against the Serbian Government as “foolish,” and adding, “The documents assembled in the course of my investigation prove unquestionably not only that official Serbia had no knowledge of the outrage, but that those who prepared it had concealed themselves from her.”(8)

The lack of any proof against Serbia made Berchtold anxious about the outcome of the trial. Fearing either an acquittal, or at least too mild a sentence, he tried to bring pressure to bear on the court. This is shown by his letter of October 1, 1914 (shortly before the opening of the trial), to the Austro-Hungarian Minister for Bosniak-Herzegovinian affairs. He drew the Minister’s attention to the very unfavourable consequences which would follow upon “a verdict which should not fulfil expectations. . . . Such a verdict would compromise the declarations of the authorities of Bosnia-Herzegovina in

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connection with the inquiry, and consequently our first diplomatic action against Serbia. Thus our right to enter into a conflict with Serbia, giving rise to a world war, would itself be called in question.”(9)

There can therefore be no suggestion of Serbia's official complicity, which was the more unlikely in view of the state of profound hostility existing in 1914 between the Government and the “Black Hand.” The military element was predominant in this society, consisting as it did largely of the officers responsible for the recent Serbian successes; and they reproached the Pachitch Radical Ministry with lack of consideration for the army, which they claimed incarnated the nation; and the society in general was violently opposed to the Government. Dimitrievitch and his associates were closely involved in the political intrigues which, a few weeks before the tragedy of June 28th, nearly led to the fall of the Pachitch Cabinet. They were even hostile to the old King, Peter Karageorgevitch, who had ascended the throne after the assassination of King Alexander and Queen Draga, in which they had had a hand. There was a state of the most acute tension between the civil authorities and the “Praetorian spirit” of these officers;(10) and the suggestion of any connivance on the part of the Serbian Government with the inspirers and authors of the crime of June 28th therefore encountered a fundamental objection which must have the effect of rendering any such hypothesis untenable.

The Ballplatz was therefore unable to formulate any definite accusation in 1914. In order to call the Serbian Government to account for the murder of the Archduke by Printsip, it had to put its complaint in the form which

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the German Minister at Belgrade defined as follows: the Serbian Government "had created that atmosphere which alone permits such explosions of wild fanaticism." (11) But it was a ground sufficient, in the eyes of the Austro-Hungarian Government, for seizing the opportunity presented by the tragedy in order to achieve its great design, the annihilation of Serbia; and that situation arose which the Russian Minister Sazonov had foreseen as early as the beginning of 1914. "At a given moment," he had declared, "especially if Germany is sympathetic, the warlike school of thought whose partisans claim that war is perhaps the sole means of settling inextricable internal difficulties may gain the upper hand." (12) The "given moment" was the tragedy of Sarajevo.

The narrative of the negotiations which took place between the day of the crime and the declaration of war on Serbia will show how the Austrian will to war gained its ends. "Especially if Germany is sympathetic," Sazonov had said. It was precisely upon the position of Germany that Austria desired immediate information.

CHAPTER III

GERMANY ADVISES IMMEDIATE WAR

The Position of the Austro-Hungarian Government

BERCHTOLD was the more insistent to obtain assurances from Berlin because, if his policy were to prevail, he must have the acquiescence of his Emperor and that of the Hungarian Prime Minister; and he felt that the fact of German adherence to his policy would have a decisive influence upon the minds of both.

Francis Joseph had no doubt already clearly before him the question whether those who directed the policy of the Dual Monarchy could long remain "passive spectators" of the danger presented by their Slav neighbours. But, faced with the responsibility for a war in which he would run the risk of attracting the hostility of "everybody, and above all Russia," against Austria, he hesitated.⁽¹⁾ He desired to be certain of Germany's support.

As for Tisza, his position was not in doubt; he was frankly hostile to war. As a Magyar, he looked askance at the possible incorporation in the Monarchy of fresh Slav elements, which might weaken Hungarian influence; and this personal conviction explains his opposition to any idea of an attack on Serbia. He was also afraid of the impression which such an attack would make if it were undertaken without direct proof of Serbian responsibility for Sarajevo. It would mean exposing Austria-Hungary "to the eyes of the whole world as a disturber of the peace," and committing "a fatal error." Moreover, he could see cracks in the Austro-German

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group of allies which, in his opinion, made prudence in action essential. The Austro-German links with Rumania had weakened, and the only State on which the Central Empires could depend—Bulgaria—was “absolutely exhausted.” Fearful of the disparity of resources between the two opposed allied groups, Tisza felt that it was necessary to make sure of support, obtain guarantees, and “create a political situation which would make the respective distribution of force less unfavourable.”(2) Not that he shrank from the prospect of war in itself, for it would in any case always be possible to “find a *casus belli*,” but that the present moment struck him as badly chosen and the ground as badly prepared.

Berchtold had still another motive for addressing himself to Germany. In accordance with the pronouncement of Austria’s ally in favour of either a warlike or a peaceful policy, he would be able definitively to determine his own course of action. But he had no time to lose, because of the impending departure of William II for his annual cruise in the Baltic.

The Hoyos Mission to Berlin (July 5th)

In agreement with his Sovereign, Berchtold dispatched his confidential agent, Count Alexander Hoyos, to Berlin bearing two documents: a memorandum drawn up several weeks previously in the Ballplatz, and an autograph letter from Francis Joseph to William II. The importance of the Hoyos mission, which reached Berlin on July 5th, is self-evident; but it is further emphasized by the narrative of a conversation which Conrad von Hötzendorf had with his Sovereign at Schönbrunn on that very same day.

From Francis Joseph’s own lips, Conrad learnt that

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the Emperor had sent a Note to Germany to find out where he stood. The General expressed the hope that there would be no delay about the reply, "upon which," he declared, "the great decision depends."⁽³⁾ When he spoke of "the great decision," it may be presumed that he was not only thinking about a war between Austria-Hungary and Serbia, but even more of war between Austria-Hungary and Russia, protector of Serbia; therefore between Germany and Russia, and thus also between Germany and France. Analysis of the documents concerned will enable us to decide.

The memorandum⁽⁴⁾ of which Hoyos was the bearer presented the diplomatic situation in a light in conformity with Tisza's own views. It enumerated the grounds for anxiety provided by the political state of the Balkans since the last two wars: Serbia's prestige increased by her victories; Rumania more and more attracted towards Russia; and the weakness of Turkey, who was no longer, as she used to be, a "strong counterweight against Russia and the Balkan States." It further attributed to Russia and France a desire to form a Balkan league, which would contribute towards the annihilation of the "military superiority of the Triple Alliance," the "displacement of the balance of European forces," and would imperil "the territorial integrity of the Monarchy by a gradual withdrawal of its Eastern frontiers towards the West." It was therefore essential to come to an understanding with Bulgaria, who since the last crisis was less under the influence of Russia. An agreement of this kind would cause Rumania to hesitate, and would prevent her from ranging herself with the adversaries of Austria-Hungary in case of an Austro-Russian conflict.

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A plan of such scope could hardly be carried out in haste, but the event at Sarajevo had unexpectedly intervened and it enabled an emergency postscript to be added to the memorandum. Its conclusion was drafted in the form of a metaphor which, though vague, was of the utmost urgency: "The Monarchy is thus under the most imperious necessity of breaking the threads of the web which her enemies are seeking to weave around her."

Francis Joseph's personal letter to William II repeated the assertions of the memorandum, underlined them, and insisted upon the condition essential to the carrying out of a programme designed to secure "the isolation and belittlement of Serbia" through the formation of a new Balkan alliance under the auspices of the Triple Alliance: Serbia, "who now serves as the pivot of Pan-Slav policy," should be "eliminated from the Balkans as a political factor."⁽⁵⁾ What Francis Joseph thus suggested to his Imperial colleague was to inflict a punishment on Serbia for the assassination at Sarajevo which could be no less than her reduction to a condition of political dependence.

How was this programme, so clearly aggressive in character, received in Berlin?

The Position of the German Government

We have already seen how William II's views had developed since the autumn of 1913, and how he had rallied to the idea of an approaching general war. The murder of his friend Francis Ferdinand made a deep impression on him: he was, as he himself said, overwhelmed. On the morrow of the outrage he received a telegram from Tschirschky, his ambassador in Vienna, which he found too moderate for his liking—in fact, "stupidly" moderate.

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He wrote on the margin of it this comment, indicative of a definite decision: "Serbia must be dealt with, and as soon as possible." (6) The personnel of the Wilhelmstrasse reckoned that by reason of this event the Emperor would, if occasion arose, favour military action on the part of Austria, with all its consequences.

Two German journalists, in close touch with both the Wilhelmstrasse and the Ballplatz, made important revelations of a semi-official character to the Vienna Government about the state of mind in Berlin. (7) The annihilation of Serbia as punishment for the outrage, they declared, was a vital question for Austria. "If anybody should say just the right thing to the (German) Emperor at this very moment, while the murder at Sarajevo fills him with horror," he would promise his support even to the point of war; Germany is determined to back up Austria "through thick and thin," the German Ministry for Foreign Affairs judge the circumstances favourable for precipitating "the great decision," and German opinion would "rally as one man" to the side of Austria. No time must be lost: "yesterday would have been better than to-day, but to-day is still better than to-morrow"; nor is it "possible for a Great Power to speak in clearer language."

In these circumstances the result of Hoyos's consultation in Berlin was, as we shall see, that any peaceful orientation of the negotiations to be conducted with Serbia was put aside *a priori*.

William II gives an absolute Undertaking

The documents brought by Hoyos (which contained no information about any judicial inquiry in connection with

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the outrage) were handed to the German Emperor at the New Palace at Potsdam by the Austro-Hungarian ambassador, Szögyény. As soon as he had read them, William II declared that "a serious European complication must be expected." He promised his "full support," and advised immediate action against Serbia. Szögyény gives his judgment of the Emperor's opinion in the following terms:

"The attitude of Russia would, in any case, be hostile; but that had been expected for years past, and even if it came to a war between Austria-Hungary and Russia we could be sure that Germany would support us, with her usual loyalty to the alliance. As matters stand Russia, unprepared for war, would certainly think twice before resorting to arms. But she will not fail to fan the flame in the Balkans, and support the action of the other Powers of the Triple *Entente*."

Accordingly, while he reckoned the risks of a general war resulting from the Austrian initiative, at the same time William II sketched the outline of a German thesis—that of Russia's responsibility for the outbreak of war—which was to take shape day by day and later become the *leit-motiv* of the Wilhelmstrasse's propaganda.

The Austrian ambassador finally sums up the Emperor's views as follows: "If we really considered a war against Serbia to be essential, he (the Emperor) would regret it if we failed to take advantage of the present favourable moment."(8)

After Szögyény's departure William II had several conversations during the evening of July 5th and the morning of July 6th both with the Chancellor, Bethmann-Hollweg, and with various high officials of his army and

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navy. To all of them he confided the undertaking that he had given in case of an Austro-Serbian conflict, which might lead to Russian intervention and consequently to a European war, and satisfied himself that the German army and navy were in a position to face such an eventuality.

He was asked if there was any occasion to take special measures, and replied in the negative.⁽⁹⁾ This reply may be justified on two grounds; firstly that it was essential not to put the other Powers on the alert, but on the contrary to preserve appearances and allay their suspicions, and we shall see later how far this preoccupation controlled the line of action of the two Governments. The second reason is clearly stated in the correspondence of Count von Waldersee, Deputy-Chief of the General Staff, who was then on leave. On July 17th he wrote to the Secretary of State, von Jagow: "I am here ready to leap forth, the General Staff is ready, we have no further preparations to make." Later, in 1919, he declared that there was no occasion for special orders, since the plan of mobilization had been completed on March 31, 1914. "The army," he concluded, "was ready, as usual."⁽¹⁰⁾

The conversations which took place at Potsdam on July 5th were followed by one between Bethmann-Hollweg, speaking expressly in the name of his Sovereign, and Szögyény and Hoyos in Berlin on July 6th. The Chancellor renewed the promise of Germany's support, "whatever our decision might be," as the Austrian ambassador put it in his report of this conversation. Szögyény added that he "gathered that the Chancellor of the Empire, like his Emperor, regards *immediate action*

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on our part" (these words are underlined in the original) "against Serbia as the best and most radical solution of our difficulties in the Balkans. From the international point of view, he considers the present moment the most favourable."(11)

Government circles in Germany were therefore prepared for strong measures, with all the consequences they might entail. William II felt that there was nothing more to be done but await events without sounding an alarm; and for his own part, on Bethmann-Hollweg's advice he set out on his cruise, since he could of course keep in close touch with the development of the situation.

Austria's appeal for German support had succeeded so completely that the German Emperor had given an absolute undertaking, and had even emphasized the scope of it by his urgent advice that the pace be forced, and that advantage be promptly taken of the exceptional circumstances which presented themselves. On July 5th William II, holding the fate of Austria and Serbia in his hands, held also the fate of the peace of Europe. He deliberately chose war. A few days after the conversations in Potsdam and Berlin the German ambassador in Constantinople, Baron von Wangenheim (relying upon what he had himself heard from Berlin about these conversations), was in a position to say to his Italian colleague: "It is war."(12)

The same conclusion was formulated by a witness, Count Hoyos, who was himself to some extent an active participant. "I consider it my duty," he wrote, "to declare that in Berlin Count Szögyény and myself both received the impression that the German Government was in favour of immediate offensive action on our part against

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Serbia, though it was quite clearly recognized that a world war might be the consequence."

It remains to be decided whether Germany was forced to take this line. Hoyos himself answers the question. "The German Government was entirely free to say 'No' and dissuade us from any action against Serbia. We might have resented this a little; but the German Government certainly did not allow itself to be influenced in this decision by any question of our good or bad humour." (13)

Moreover German historians themselves agree with this judgment. Hermann Lutz considers that by thus leaving absolute power of decision to the Austrian Government, the German Government incurred "co-responsibility" in the conduct of its ally. (14) Eugen Fischer also underlines the gravity of the undertaking given by the German Emperor and his Chancellor. In the course of his narrative he shows repeatedly how the promises that had been made weighed upon the policy of the Wilhelmstrasse down to the very end of July. "It was," as he expressly states, "the policy approved by Berlin on the 5th of July which ended by letting loose the World War, a result which was none the less bitterly regretted by the Emperor and the Chancellor." Elsewhere he writes: "the decision of the 5th of July, which let loose the World War." (15)

CHAPTER IV

AUSTRIA DECIDES ON WAR

THE Government of Vienna could now have no further doubts upon the standpoint of the Government of Berlin, which had been thus clearly expressed. Whatever action Austria decided upon Germany would support; but what she wanted and hoped for was war, she had plainly advised "immediate action against Serbia" and it remained for Austria, thus strongly encouraged by her ally, to take the necessary initiative.

The Austro-Hungarian Cabinet Council (July 7th)

On Count Hoyos's return Berchtold made speed, and as early as July 7th after a preliminary conversation with the two Prime Ministers of the Dual Monarchy, the Austrian and the Hungarian—a conversation in which the German ambassador Tschirschky took part—he presided over a meeting of Ministers(1) whose deliberations were obviously dominated by the German promises.

There were present none the less two conflicting opinions, and one of them was that of Berchtold. As soon as the session was opened, he referred to the "unconditional" undertaking given by Berlin. He made no secret of the fact that war with Serbia might lead to war with Russia, nevertheless he thought that it was essential to take advantage of a situation which was propitious at the moment, but might not remain so for long: it would be rash to leave Russia time to form a strong and "compact" Balkan coalition whose spear-

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head would necessarily be aimed at Austria. It was essential to "anticipate" the adversary, and settle accounts with Serbia while there was time. The other opinion was that of Tisza. He expressed it strongly, going so far as to protest against the interference of Berlin which, he declared, had no right to "judge whether it is the moment for us to march against Serbia or not." The grounds for his opposition were the same as those which have been stated above, and particularly the uncertainty of the political situation in the Balkans. But, as he set them before his colleagues, he again employed terms which are worth quoting because they imply the character of Berchtold's projects.

"Never," Tisza declared, "would he give his approval to a sudden attack on Serbia, such as seemed to be intended and such as, he regretted to say, Count Hoyos had suggested in Berlin without prior diplomatic action;(2) because in this case Austria would, in his opinion, put herself in a very unfavourable position in the eyes of Europe, and in all probability have to reckon with the hostility of the whole of the Balkans, Bulgaria excepted." He proposed that Serbia should first be presented with conditions: "certainly hard, but not incapable of accomplishment." Only if Serbia rejected these conditions should Austria-Hungary proceed to "warlike action." "But he declared in advance the object of such a war might well be the reduction of Serbia, though not her complete annihilation; for Russia would never consent to that without a struggle to the death, and he himself in his capacity of Prime Minister of Hungary would never give his assent to the annexation of any part of Serbia by the Dual Monarchy."

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Thus Tisza put clearly before his colleagues the immense gravity of the decision which they were about to take: he underlined "the frightful consequences of a European war in present circumstances."

But he was alone in his opinion. The other Ministers inclined towards the "immediate action" recommended by Germany.(3) The Austrian Prime Minister, Stürgkh, even set forth a scheme for the subjection of Serbia which he had already outlined in 1913.(4) The Karageorgevitch dynasty was to be expelled, and the crown offered to "a European prince" (the nationality of whom he did not specify); while "the diminished kingdom was to be from a military point of view put in a dependant relation with the Dual Monarchy"; an idea which recalls that of William II when he advised Berchtold, in October 1913, to demand that Serbia should put her army at the disposal of the Emperor Francis Joseph. With the exception of Tisza, all the Ministers present were in agreement in contemplating immediate resort to force of arms.

We can therefore see that in Vienna on July 7th, just in the same way as at Potsdam on July 5th, and Berlin on July 6th, all the consequences of an armed conflict with Belgrade were expressly foreseen and formulated. Nevertheless the Austro-Hungarian Ministers, having to decide, as one of them put it, "the fundamental question whether to proceed definitely to warlike action or not," did not shrink from these consequences.

They agreed, by way of satisfying Tisza, to defer mobilization until after the dispatch of an ultimatum to Serbia; but they did not propose to content themselves with "a simple diplomatic success, even if it resulted in a striking humiliation for Serbia." They decided to sub-

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mit to the Belgrade Government deliberately unacceptable conditions, "which would pave the way for a radical solution by armed intervention." Free to choose between peace and war, they declared for immediate war, as Berlin had advised.

Tisza's Conversion to the Decision to make War

But Tisza's resistance embarrassed Berchtold. The Prime Minister of Hungary felt so strongly that on the morrow of the Ministerial meeting he addressed a memorandum to the Emperor Francis Joseph in which he condemned the idea of "aggression against Serbia" and repudiated "any responsibility for an exclusively warlike and aggressive solution." (5) Berchtold felt that only the opinion of Berlin was capable of modifying Tisza's point of view. He informed the latter (6) that William II had strongly expressed his desire that Austria should undertake war against Serbia; that the Wilhelmstrasse would see a proof of the weakness of Austria in any compromise with Serbia, "which could not fail to react upon our position in the Triple Alliance and influence Germany's future policy." In other words, Berlin presented Vienna with an alternative. Unless she marched upon Serbia at once, Germany would give no guarantee for the future of her alliance with a partner who had shown such lack of decision. Faced with Germany's insistence, the Hungarian Prime Minister ended by yielding, and he even judged it expedient to take the important step of going to announce his conversion to the German ambassador in person. (7) "I did not find it easy to come to the decision to give my advice for war," Tisza told the ambassador; "but I am now firmly convinced of its necessity, and

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I shall do all in my power to maintain the greatness of the Monarchy."

He also informed the ambassador that it was the intention of the Ballplatz to draft the Note to Serbia in such a way as to make "its acceptance practically speaking impossible." He protested in advance against any criticism which uninformed persons might make about Austria's "lack of resolution" and "hesitation": the important thing in any case was that Berlin should know that "such is not the case." As he took leave of Tschirschky he said to him cordially and confidently: "Together we can now look the future calmly and firmly in the face." When William II learnt of Tisza's declarations, made in the course of this kind of "visit to Canossa," he expressed his admiration. "There," he declared, "is indeed a man." And the German Emperor might certainly congratulate himself on Tisza's conversion as a German success.

Final Acquiescence of Francis Joseph

The encouragement and indeed the insistence of Berlin also won for Berchtold's policy the complete adherence of his Sovereign. On July 5th Francis Joseph had told Conrad that he would agree to war against Serbia if Germany promised her support.(8) He was therefore all the more deeply impressed by the testimony he received upon the state of opinion in German governing circles; it confirmed him in his determination to "put an end to a state of things" whose "persistence" seemed to him "a permanent danger" for his House and kingdom.(9) He was particularly responsive to the kind of personal direct promise which William II gave him when, in a

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letter written from on board the German Imperial yacht *Hohenzollern*, he assured Francis Joseph that, "even in the darkest hour," he would find the German Emperor and his kingdom faithfully at his side.(10)

Thus Austrian policy, inclined though it had been from the very outset to resort to strong measures—those measures which Conrad had so long advised—did not finally decide its line of action until it was assured of the absolute support of Berlin. "Complete agreement with Germany has been reached in connection with the situation in foreign policy arising out of the Sarajevo outrage and all its possible consequences": such was the communication which the Ballplatz made to its ambassador in Paris,(11) and Berchtold also informed his ambassador in Rome that he was acting "in complete accord" with Berlin.(12)

The German Government had not only given its ally enthusiastic encouragement but had also exerted strong pressure; the Ballplatz received its marching orders from the Wilhelmstrasse, forcibly conveyed in the clearest terms, it being taken for granted that Germany neither would nor could stay Austria's arm on pain of incurring the justified reproach "of depriving her of her last chance of political rehabilitation." (13) The Bavarian *chargé d'affaires* in Berlin perfectly summed up the state of mind in high German circles.(14) "It was considered," he declared, "that Austria, who," thanks to her indecision and her inconsequence, "had now become, just as Turkey used to be, the sick man of Europe," had reached a "decisive hour." And it was also a "favourable hour," of which she ought to take advantage, "even at the risk of further complications." For this reason Berlin

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informed Vienna that "any decision which might be taken, even at the risk of war with Russia, would have the support of Germany, who gave her ally *carte blanche*." The Bavarian diplomat even added that the Austro-Hungarian Government had as a matter of fact never anticipated "such unconditional support of the Danubian Monarchy by Germany" and that it was indeed almost embarrassed because it did not receive counsels of "caution" and "moderation" from its ally.

These comments of an authoritative witness on July 18th may serve as a natural transition between the record of decisions taken in favour of war in principle and the consideration of those proceedings which, in the course of the next fortnight, led to irrevocable action. We shall see Berlin tirelessly urging Vienna to engage in "preventive" war, and exerting every effort to reduce to nullity all attempts on the part of the *Entente* to smooth over the Austro-Serbian conflict, which in fact was bound to become (as is proved by documentary evidence) an Austro-Russian conflict, and finally an Austro-German-Russian conflict.

CHAPTER V

THE ULTIMATUM TO SERBIA: AUSTRO-GERMAN SOLIDARITY

THE impatience of the German Government and its anxiety to see immediate action taken against Serbia was expressed more than once. On the morrow of the Austro-Hungarian Cabinet Council Jagow recommended that steps should be taken "without any delay."⁽¹⁾ But none the less there were delays. Even before the Note to Serbia was drafted Berchtold was anxious about the date of its dispatch; he first contemplated communicating it before the departure of the President of the French Republic who was on a visit to the Court of the Czar which had been arranged some time before;⁽²⁾ but he then changed his mind, and decided that the Note should not be transmitted until after Poincaré had left Russia. "A great pity," said William II.⁽³⁾ Jagow also "infinitely" regretted the delay.⁽⁴⁾ The reasons for this desire for immediate action were that it was felt in Germany that too long an interval might allow the emotion aroused by the Sarajevo outrage to die down; and that Austro-German intentions, which all possible measures were being taken to conceal from the diplomats of the *Entente*, ran the risk of becoming known or at least guessed abroad; while it was also possible that the courage of Vienna—always an uncertain quantity—might fail. Accordingly, at the Cabinet Council on July 19th at which the text of the ultimatum was definitely approved, Berchtold secured a decision that it should be dispatched

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on July 23rd at the latest. The reason which he gave for admitting no further delay was that "they are already getting restive in Berlin."(5)

The Ultimatum to Serbia (July 23rd)

Between the time when Tisza rallied to the idea of a "short-term ultimatum" and that of the definite drafting of the text of the Note, four days had elapsed. In the course of those four days the Note was drafted in three different forms, though the last embodied only slight alterations from the other two which had been suggested by Wiesner's report. There could indeed be no question of anything more than alteration in detail, since Austria's decision had been taken in advance of the investigation.

The essential demands upon Serbia were as follows:(6)

The Serbian Government was required to publish on the front page of its *Official Gazette* a declaration condemning the propaganda against Austria and its "criminal proceedings," and also to issue, in the *Army Bulletin*, a similar special Order of the day emanating from the King.

Apart from such a request for this kind of general confession of guilt the ultimatum contained ten specific conditions, two of which may be emphasized on account of their gravity; the fifth, which required the Serbian Government to "accept the collaboration in Serbia of delegates of the Imperial and Royal Government for the suppression of the subversive movement directed against the territorial integrity of the Monarchy"; and the sixth, which required the Serbian Government to "open a judicial investigation against accessories of the plot of June 28th who are on Serbian territory. Authorities delegated by the Imperial and Royal Government shall take

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part in the investigation relating thereto." The object of these two points was to alienate Serbian public opinion from the King and the Government. They were universally regarded as constituting something of a scandal in the sphere of international law, inasmuch as they infringed the sovereign independence of Serbia; and were frankly criticized by the German jurist Schücking as early as 1917.(7)

The tenor of the Note corresponded with the warlike intentions of its authors and their certainty, first affirmed on July 7th, that it would lead to war. The final deliberations of the Cabinet Council assembled on July 19th were opened with the words: "immediately after the outbreak of war . . ."; and Berchtold, when he left the session of July 14th, wrote that the Note rendered "an armed conflict" probable.(8) If, contrary to all probability, Serbia should submit, the Austro-Hungarian Minister for Foreign Affairs intended to "exert a very extensive interference in the practical execution of the points demanded," to the end that hostilities should inevitably follow. But the considered opinion of the Ballplatz was that the demands could not be accepted by "any State which still retains the least dignity and pride."(9) This, however, did not prevent Berchtold, five days after the meeting of the Council, from depicting these demands as containing "fundamentally" nothing which was not quite natural as between "two States which ought to live in peace and friendship."(10)

The hour of the delivery of the ultimatum was determined in accordance with information which the German Government itself undertook to obtain.(11) It was six o'clock in the evening, because at that moment Poincaré

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would be at sea. As Serbia was given forty-eight hours to reply, the time-limit would thus expire at six o'clock on the evening of Saturday, July 25th, and the order for mobilization could therefore be issued during the night of Saturday-Sunday.

Germany's Cognizance of the Terms and Text of the Ultimatum

At this point an important question arises. In July 1914 Jagow, the German Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, declared officially in his diplomatic communications that the Wilhelmstrasse had no knowledge, before the delivery of the ultimatum, either of its detailed terms or of its text. The Wilhelmstrasse, according to Jagow, had left the drafting of the Note entirely to the discretion of its ally.(12) What was this declaration worth?

It is not in accordance with the facts. As early as July 11th, Berlin was expressly informed by its ambassador in Vienna about the most important points in the Note,(13) and no objection whatever was raised to them. At the same time, no doubts could be entertained about the impression which their publication would produce. The German Government was, in fact, made aware almost at the same moment that the King of Rumania, Carol I (who, being a Hohenzollern, entertained no hostility to the Central Empires) had said that it was impossible to "put official Serbia in the same boat as the assassins," and that "he could readily understand Serbia's refusing to let her investigation be directed by an Austrian commission."(14) Although the Wilhelmstrasse was thus sufficiently initiated into the designs of the Ballplatz beforehand, it is nevertheless true that the actual text was

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not communicated until July 22nd; but even so, this was nearly twenty-four hours before the time fixed for the delivery of the Austrian Note to the Serbian Government.

Jagow had therefore no right to profess his ignorance of the Austrian demands, as he did in fact three days later. But it seems that he was acting in obedience to a word of command, inasmuch as Zimmermann, the Under-Secretary of State, said just the same thing at the same time.(15) Zimmermann himself, however, was compelled to admit the truth in 1917 as the result of an article which appeared in an American newspaper: he made this admission in confidence to his successor, but added that as he could not remember having mentioned the matter to any American journalist an official denial might be issued, and this course was taken.(16)

Since the text of the ultimatum reached Jagow at the latest at seven o'clock in the evening of July 22nd, one may be entitled to ask why he did not take advantage of the day's breathing-space at his disposal in order to exercise a moderating influence in Vienna. This question springs to mind all the more naturally inasmuch as, in 1919, the German Minister declared that he had considered the Note to be "too harsh, in its form as well as in its contents."(17) And some surprise has therefore been expressed that it never occurred to him to use the telegraph or the telephone in order to convey his impression to the Ballplatz.

What is especially worthy of note is that, as early as July 21st—when the Note had not yet been delivered and its text had not even reached Berlin—Bethmann-Hollweg instructed his respective ambassadors to the three Powers

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of the *Entente* to represent "the proceedings and conditions of the Austro-Hungarian Government" "as equitable and moderate." He added that since the refusal of these conditions by Serbia was not impossible, Austria in such an event would have to resort to "strong pressure" and even "military measures." (18)

German circles, it may be observed, had formed this opinion betimes; for as early as July 10th, when the Chancellor told the Prussian Minister of the Interior that Serbia would be presented with an ultimatum, the Minister at once remarked "That means war." (19)

The Austro-German Tactic of Dissimulation

In connection with the ultimatum certain other facts should be mentioned, because they throw into higher relief the line of action adopted by the two Imperial Governments. They desired to allay suspicion about what was in preparation, and at the same time to take certain precautions. Conrad von Hötzendorf recommended "avoidance of any action which might have the effect of putting our adversaries on the alert too soon, and enable them to make ready for defence. We must on the contrary preserve a completely pacific appearance." (20) The Wilhelmstrasse was also anxious to avoid "with care," as Jagow put it, "anything which might encourage the belief that we are urging the Austrians to go to war." (21)

The Ballplatz was informed that the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* was publishing deliberately moderate comments on the Austro-Serbian conflict: "this semi-official paper," it was explained, "is anxious not to sound the alarm in advance," but it was added that the Ball-

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platz should not be misled by this or think "that Germany proposes to dissociate herself from the determination displayed in Vienna." (22) And this Austro-German solidarity in tactic and in action was to be confirmed by future events.

The Serbian Government's reply to the ultimatum was conveyed to the Austrian Minister in Belgrade by the Prime Minister Pachitch himself, at 5.58 in the evening. It was not a pure and simple acceptance of all the conditions, but contained certain reservations. The Austrian representative therefore, in accordance with instructions which he had already received three days before the delivery of the ultimatum bidding him make ready to leave, immediately broke off diplomatic relations and left Serbian territory at once. (23) Effect was thus given to the intention admitted by Berchtold three days earlier: "to take, in agreement with Germany, the strongest measures against Serbia." (24)

CHAPTER VI

GERMANY OPPOSED TO THE INTERVENTION OF THE *ENTENTE*

The Reaction of the Powers to the Ultimatum

THIS ultimatum, issued four weeks after the Sarajevo outrage, produced an effect of astonishment among the Great Powers.

The impression which it created in London was "overwhelming." (1) Sir Edward Grey described it as "the most formidable document which any State had ever addressed to another." (2) He felt that "any State which accepted such conditions would cease to count among the number of independent States," (3) and declared that the text itself "dictates the terms of the reply." (4) The London newspaper, the *Morning Post*, considered the ultimatum to be "a challenge to the Triple *Entente*." (5)

In St. Petersburg, Sazonov was profoundly shocked and made no secret of his feelings. In the course of an interview of an hour and a half with the Austrian ambassador, he referred to the same idea several times. "I know what this means. You want to make war on Serbia. I can see what is happening: the German newspapers are urging you on. You are going to set fire to Europe, and you are assuming a great responsibility. . . . You want war, you have burned your boats . . . one can see the value of your pacific assurances! You are setting fire to Europe." (6) At the same time the Russian Minister was not hostile to the idea of some concession on the part of Serbia; on the contrary, he even told the German ambas-

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sador that "on the purely juridical question" Serbia should give Austria satisfaction so far as any proved facts were concerned. But he would not admit the political demands which infringed the independence of the Serb kingdom. In his opinion those demands raised "a European question," and he declared that Russia would intervene to stop "the swallowing up" of Serbia by the Dual Monarchy.(7)

The Central Empires oppose the Entente's Proposals for Compromise

Now that the situation was aggravated by the dispatch of the ultimatum, the *Entente* Powers made immediate efforts to ward off the danger which threatened Europe. In view of the drastic nature of the Austrian conditions they tried to obtain an extension of the insufficient time-limit of forty-eight hours granted to Belgrade for reply, feeling that this would give them time to produce an acceptable formula and find some common ground between the two adversaries. The initiative in this direction was taken by Sazonov,(8) supported by Grey, and in association with Paris.

But the request was rejected by Vienna. The official at the Ballplatz to whom Sazonov's proposal was handed, Baron von Macchio, simply put it aside; the communication to the Great Powers of the Austrian Note to Serbia was a mere diplomatic courtesy—it was "purely informative" and implied no invitation "to make known their views on the matter," and Berchtold "entirely" approved his subordinate's "categorical reply."(9)

The Wilhelmstrasse also played its part in this business. On receiving from England the proposal that the time-

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limit should be extended,(10) Jagow declared himself ready to transmit it to Vienna; but he added that, as the ultimatum expired that very day and as Berchtold was at Ischl with the Emperor Francis Joseph, he did not believe that any extension was possible.(11) As a matter of fact he did not transmit the proposal to Vienna until several hours after its arrival, and only two hours before the expiration of the time-limit fixed by the Austrian Government. When the Russian *chargé d'affaires* asked him for an interview for the purpose of requesting the intervention of Berlin,(12) Jagow did not arrange a meeting "until the end of the afternoon, that is to say, at the moment when the ultimatum expired," so that he was able to say "that it was too late for any such suggestion."(13) Moreover he showed the greatest discretion in the drafting of his instructions to the German ambassador in Vienna, contenting himself with repeating the terms of his own reply to London, the object of which was simply to provide a reason for refusal.(14) "The transmission (of the proposal to Vienna)," Hermann Lutz observes, "was obviously only a matter of form; and London did not allow itself to be taken in."(15)

The attitude of the Central Empires was in sharp contrast with that of the *Entente*. St. Petersburg, London, and Paris were anxious that Serbia should not take up any irrevocable position, and that she should make every possible concession on all points where the dignity and independence of the Serbian State were not in question. Russia was even of opinion that the Serbian Government should not resist Austrian invasion, but bow to force, evacuate the capital, retire into the interior of the country, and then call upon the Powers.(16) The "friends"

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of Serbia did not desire to see a situation, already only too critical, become still further embittered.

The German Thesis of Localization of the Conflict

But even if Serbia were to accept the moderating counsels of her friends, it was essential that Germany for her part should exert a moderating influence upon her ally. Germany however, although she kept in close touch with Vienna, declared that she did not wish to meddle with what she described as "the internal affairs of Austria-Hungary." (17)

When William II was informed that Sir Edward Grey had expressed the hope that Germany would not support the Austrian demand but assist England in attempting to obtain an extension of the time-limit; and even—in the case of Austro-Russian tension—associate herself in an attempt at mediation, he declared that it was beyond his competence to "define the lines upon which His Majesty the Emperor Francis Joseph should protect his honour," and he dismissed such intervention as a "bad joke." According to him, Serbia could not be placed, as Sir Edward Grey desired, "on the same footing as Austria and the other Great Powers." The "national dignity" of the Serbs was non-existent; they were "a band of brigands who ought to be brought to book for their crimes": and he also used the word *canaille*. He made no secret of his bad temper over "Great Britain's monstrous impudence," and also declared that the English proposal of mediation was "futile," because "in matters of honour and vital interest one does not consult other people." (18)

In order to justify its refusal to lend itself to any

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conciliatory step the Wilhelmstrasse produced a thesis which historians call the thesis of localization. The conflict, the Wilhelmstrasse declared, ought to remain limited to Austria and Serbia. No other country ought to take part in it, because "in view of the diversity of obligations of alliance" the result must have "incalculable consequences" for European peace. It was in these terms that the thesis was set forth as early as July 21st (that is to say, two days before the delivery of the Austrian ultimatum) in a circular dispatch from Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg to the German ambassadors accredited to the *Entente* Powers:(19) in which same dispatch, even before he had seen the text of the Austrian Note, he praised its equity and moderation. That the other Governments should be passive spectators of the Austrian "punitive expedition" against regicide Serbia; that (as Nicolson, the British Under-Secretary of State put it) they should "keep the ring while Austria quietly strangles Serbia"(20)—such was the attitude which Germany, despite her own active solidarity with Austria, demanded from the *Entente* on pain of the gravest threats.

The real object of this thesis of localization was to make it appear that the onus for the future course of events depended on Russia alone: if she went to the help of Belgrade then the provisions of the Triple Alliance would necessarily come into play, Germany would be forced to enter the conflict in aid of Austria, and this would lead to a general war the responsibility for which must fall upon the St. Petersburg Government. It was a question of manœuvring Russia into a false position. If you make any move, Germany said to her in effect, I shall be constrained also to take action, and this will

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lead to the intervention of France and England. Such an extension of this Austro-Serbian quarrel depends upon your policy, and it is in your power, by taking no action yourself, to spare Europe these terrible consequences. Otherwise, it is you who will be the villain of the piece.

The German idea of putting the responsibility for possible future complications upon Russia, which we have already seen sketched by the pen of William II, was henceforth to dominate the situation. Down to the very last day of July it was to be the essential argument in Bethmann-Hollweg's policy. But the necessity of Russian intervention in favour of Serbia was inevitable, as Hermann Lutz has recognized: "Nobody," he says, "could in fact deny Russia's right to take action for the protection of Serbian sovereignty and integrity, both obviously threatened by Austria-Hungary." Lutz, like another German historian, Erich Brandenburg, recognizes that Russia's "prestige" was at stake and compelled her to intervene, and that "her inactivity, in such a case, would have destroyed the confidence of the Balkan Slavs in the support of the Czar: a confidence already shaken by the events of the past few years." (21) This judgment of two German historians is in accord with the opinion which had previously (at the time of the recent Balkan wars) been formulated by Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg himself. On February 10, 1913, in the course of an earlier crisis, he did not disguise from Berchtold the chimerical character of the idea of localization: even at so early a date he regarded it as "practically impossible" for Russia "to look on passively, without an enormous loss of prestige," at any military initiative against Serbia on the part of Austria. (22) He expressed the same opinion again

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twelve days before the Sarajevo tragedy. Looking back on the events of 1908-9, he prophesied quite clearly that in the event of a fresh Balkan crisis Russia would no longer be disposed to let Austria have a free hand; "and one could scarcely blame her for it," he added.(23)

So it is not surprising that when the fresh crisis occurred on June 28th, the two Imperial Governments should at once have clearly foreseen the risk of a general war, which had in fact never been absent from their minds; for they had never believed in the value of their own thesis. Berchtold did not believe in localization, for as early as July 13th he recommended the Austrian diplomatic representatives not only in Serbia and Montenegro but also in Russia to take steps to secure the safety of their archives.(24) Nor did William II himself believe in it; as early as July 19th, while he was on his cruise, he insisted that the great German steamship companies should be informed of the dispatch of the ultimatum, and that "in view of the consequences, which it is impossible to foresee and which may materialize very rapidly," they should be put in a position "to have time to take the necessary steps and give orders to steamers which may be in foreign waters."(25) These instructions were executed the next day.

Another proof that William II did not believe in localization is that, as early as July 20th, he gave orders that the German fleet (then on manœuvres) was to be "kept concentrated until July 25th" (the date of the expiration of the time-limit granted Serbia for her reply) "so that it may be in a position immediately to

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execute any order to interrupt its cruise.”(26) The naval authorities did not believe in localization; for, as early as July 22nd they informed the Wilhelmstrasse that the German fleet ought to be recalled six days in advance of there being “ground for reckoning with the possibility of a war with England.”(27) Francis Joseph did not believe in localization; for after the dispatch of the ultimatum he said that it would certainly be rejected, and he added: “We must make no mistake about it—this means general war.”(28)

Among the facts which prove that Germany was not taken in by the thesis which she herself maintained, there is one which deserves to be especially emphasized, namely the drafting of the ultimatum to Belgium as early as July 26th—though it was not to be dispatched, as we shall see, until several days later. And here a comparison of dates is essential. The ultimatum to Serbia was delivered on July 23rd, and it was during the evening of July 25th that the Serbian reply was received: a reply whose conciliatory character was universally recognized, even in Germany. War might accordingly still be avoided if Austria did not persist in her uncompromising attitude. Yet on July 26th, immediately after his return from leave, Moltke, the Chief of the German General Staff, drafted the ultimatum to Belgium(29) to which she was required to give “an unequivocal reply” within twenty-four hours after its receipt.

In this ultimatum the German Government professed itself assured that French forces were about to be moved to “the Meuse-Givet-Namur sector,” with the object of “crossing Belgian territory in order to attack Germany.” Belgium, however, was not “in a position to

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defend herself without assistance against a French invasion with sufficient prospect of success for this to be regarded as an adequate guarantee for the security of Germany." Germany must therefore "forestall the enemy attack," and it was for the Belgian Government to choose between "a benevolent neutrality" or "a friendly attitude," of which she would reap the benefit on the conclusion of peace, when the Imperial army would evacuate the country; or "a hostile attitude," the effect of which would be to compel Germany to regard the Belgian kingdom as an enemy country, and force her to "leave the future settlement of relations between the two States to the arbitrament of arms."

By thus involving Belgium in advance in the Austro-Serbian quarrel, Moltke showed that—in his eyes also—the theory of localization was hardly credible and that he anticipated a general war in view of which prompt measures must be taken. In plain fact the German Government, like the Austrian Government, regarded localization as out of the question. It would have been possible only if Vienna had shown itself less brutally uncompromising towards Serbia, and Bienvenu-Martin, the French Minister for Foreign Affairs *ad interim*, summed up the situation excellently when he told the German ambassador that "the best means of avoiding a general war was to avoid a local war."(30)

The idea of localization had nevertheless a certain reality. The Central Empires thought that the *Entente* Powers would hesitate to intervene on account of their internal difficulties, their desire for peace, and their unpreparedness for an immediate war; and as we have already seen, at the beginning of July in Potsdam and in

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Berlin these considerations had led the two Imperial Governments to suppose that while strong diplomatic pressure on Serbia preliminary to immediate military pressure might run the risk of a Russian counter-stroke, it might equally encounter no opposition, or no more than the apparent opposition of St. Petersburg. Serious working-class strikes were giving the Czar's Government much anxiety and hampering its freedom of action abroad; and though the Russian military forces—weakened by their defeats in the Japanese war—were in process of reconstitution, it was common knowledge that their new preparations would not be complete in less than three years.

As for France, she had just returned to the Chamber of Deputies a majority opposed to the law of three years' military service; besides which she was also troubled by civil disturbances, of which proof was given by the demonstrations in connection with the trial of Mme Caillaux, acquitted by the Paris Assize Court of the murder of the director of the newspaper *Figaro*. Startling statements in the Senate had revealed the fact that the army lacked the heavy artillery necessary to face a war; and finally, as Poincaré, the President of the Republic, and Viviani, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, were on a long-projected official visit to Russia, the handling of foreign affairs was at this very grave crisis entrusted to a Minister *ad interim*, Bienvenu-Martin, and the assistant-director of political affairs, Berthelot. The Wilhelmstrasse believed that it could also count upon the non-intervention of England, since the majority of the Asquith Cabinet were disinclined for any armed intervention in continental affairs; and also because

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this Cabinet was involved in the serious embarrassment of the Irish question.

Germany and Austria were further convinced of the pacific intentions of the *Entente*; and the correspondence of the Wilhelmstrasse as of the Ballplatz contained frequent expression of this confidence from the beginning of the crisis down to the very last day: Berlin and Vienna hoped that Paris and London, anxious to maintain peace, would prevent St. Petersburg from taking action.

Thus two facts emerge from the foregoing arguments:

1. The thesis of "localization" was merely an attempt to manœuvre Russia, who could not remain passive without putting herself at a serious disadvantage, into a false position in the eyes of a public opinion ignorant of the secret intentions of the Central Empires.

2. Counting on the pacific attitude of the *Entente*, Germany and Austria thought that perhaps Serbia might be crushed without Russia's intervening in her defence; but if she did come to Serbia's assistance, they hoped that the guilt of having disturbed the peace of Europe might be laid at her door.

CHAPTER VII

THE SERBIAN REPLY AND PEACE PROPOSALS OF THE *ENTENTE*

THE distrust which Austro-German policy inspired in the *Entente* Governments was increased by the events which followed the Serbian reply.

The Serbian Reply (July 25th)

If this reply(1) was not the absolute submission which Austria-Hungary demanded, it was still far from being a complete and unqualified refusal. It was drawn up with a skill which was generally applauded, and its tone and tenor were in marked contrast with the harshness—the blunt brutality—of the Austrian ultimatum. If Serbia did not accept the conditions laid down without reserve, she at any rate agreed to them in principle; and so far as the two most important points (5 and 6) were concerned, the Belgrade Government accepted the first (collaboration of Austro-Hungarian officials in the “suppression of the subversive movement against the integrity” of the Dual Monarchy) in so far as it “corresponded with the principles of international law and criminal procedure, as well as with good neighbourly relations.”

As for the second point (the participation upon Serbian territory of Austro-Hungarian authorities in a judicial investigation against those “accessories” in the conspiracy against Francis Ferdinand who might be found in the country), though the Serbian Government set it aside as “a violation of the Constitution and the law governing

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criminal procedure," the Government none the less undertook "in definite cases" to communicate the results of trials carried out under its own authority to the Austrian Government. Finally, if Vienna did not find its reply satisfactory, the Serbian Government offered to submit the issue between the two States either to the decision of the Hague International Tribunal, or to examination by the Great Powers who had taken part in framing the Serbian declaration of 1909.

Such was the document which Giesl, the Austrian Minister in Belgrade, in conformity with the instructions of the Ballplatz found unacceptable at sight, because it did not constitute entire and absolute submission.

The Pacific Attitude of the Serbian Government

The explanation of this reply need not be sought in the advice which Serbia may have received from the Powers: those who drafted it required no inspiration other than the situation of their country and its need for peace. Quite apart from general feelings and aspirations, it is undeniable that the Serbian attitude at the moment of the Sarajevo outrage was pacific; the Austrian Minister in Belgrade himself admitted a few weeks before the murder of the Archduke that the Premier, Pachitch, was sincerely "desirous of peace"; a policy which in the opinion of that diplomat corresponded with "the requirements of the kingdom's internal situation."⁽²⁾

During the Serbian Ministerial crisis at the beginning of June, what the Austrian Minister in Belgrade feared more than anything else was the accession to power in the administration of the partisans of military supremacy and the young Radicals, who were more opposed to

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Austria than Pachitch's party; and when the latter were confirmed in power the Minister felt it to be a subject for congratulation.(3)

As the Serbian army had been exhausted by two successive wars, and as it was inadequately equipped with rifles, the Government could hardly fail to pursue a policy of prudence—a fact emphasized by the German Minister in Belgrade himself at the moment of the declaration of war. The Crown Prince expressed this view in confidence to the Russian *chargé d'affaires* on July 19th, the very day when in Vienna the terms of the ultimatum to Serbia were finally drawn up;(4) and this statement anticipated the appeal which he addressed to the Czar after the ultimatum had been received. He then said: "We may be attacked after the expiration of the time-limit by the Austro-Hungarian army, which is concentrated on our frontier: it is impossible for us to defend ourselves, and we beg Your Majesty to come to our assistance at the earliest possible moment."(5)

During his conversations with the Russian diplomatic representative during the very days when these threatening decisions were being taken by Austria and Germany, Pachitch expressed his anxiety, and his desire "not to react in any way against Austria's shameful provocation."(6) And even on the morrow of the ultimatum, the German Minister in Serbia declared himself convinced of the moderation of the Serbian Prime Minister. "He will not let matters come to a conflict with the neighbouring Monarchy, and will be ready to give any undertaking."(7)

All these testimonies make it clear that in July 1914 the Serbian Government shrank from the idea of a war; and that the character of its reply to the Austrian chal-

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lenge was in conformity with its own attitude as well as its conception of the "vital interest" of its country. Why then was the ultimatum not accepted as it stood, without reserves?

Six years after the event, Pachitch disclosed his reasons.(8) He was convinced, he said, that whatever the Serbian reply might be, "even if it accepted the ultimatum without the smallest reservation," war would still break out; because the Sarajevo outrage served only as a pretext for the realization of plans long matured by the Central Empires. And in any case the ultimatum gave no details about either the "form" or the "scope" of the participation of Austro-Hungarian authorities in the investigation and the judicial proceedings contemplated in Serbia; Vienna might inundate the kingdom with police and investigators "endowed with special privileges," and an Austrian army would doubtless advance at the same time into Serbian territory. Nor was the control of the investigation clearly defined; it was not stated whether this control was to be vested in the Serbians or the Austrians. The latter would certainly arrogate "all rights" to themselves, and the former, after the ultimatum had been accepted, could not legitimately contest such pretensions. This would mean exposing Serbia to the arrest of her Ministers, to perquisitions in her Ministries and public services, and to the seizure of documents bearing upon military organization: in short, Serbia would run a great risk of finding herself "robbed of her means of action" in conditions of such tension that the smallest incident might mean war. And further weight is given to these observations set forth by Pachitch in 1920 since they were corroborated beforehand by

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Berchtold's declaration already quoted: namely that if Serbia submitted, Austria would exercise in the application of her demands a "very extensive interference" which would inevitably lead to an armed conflict.

The Reception of the Serbian Reply

The Serbian Note was of course welcomed by the *Entente* Cabinets. As Hermann Lutz remarks,(9) its moderation had all the more profound an effect upon them in proportion as they had been deeply impressed by the ultimatum, by the "entire approval" given to it by the Wilhelmstrasse, by the Wilhelmstrasse's untrue statement that it knew nothing about the document before its publication, by the refusal to extend the time-limit granted to Serbia, and by the rupture of diplomatic relations.*

But what we must above all bear in mind is the judgment pronounced by William II,(11) when on July 28th he was informed of the Serbian reply, that is to say on the morrow of his return to Potsdam.

"After a time-limit of only forty-eight hours," he said, "this is a brilliant result; more than we could ever have expected. It is a great moral success for Austria; but it dispels any reason for war, and Giesl might as well have stayed quietly in Belgrade. After this, I should never think of ordering mobilization." "I am convinced," the German Emperor further stated, "that the wishes

* Some of the facts thus recalled by the German historian are precisely those which the German military *attaché* at the Russian Court emphasized to William II, in order to explain to him the "wild excitement" which prevailed in the Czar's entourage, despite its desire for peace.(10)

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of the Danubian Monarchy as a whole have now been met. The few reservations which Serbia makes upon certain points can in my opinion be settled by negotiation. But this humble surrender is announced *urbi et orbi*, and thereby any reason for war disappears.”*

The contradiction between William II's expressed opinion and his actions could not fail to strike a writer so fond of psychological analysis as Eugen Fischer.(13) He discusses at length the bearing of the Imperial remarks, and wonders what one is to make of an opinion which strikes him as so clearly contrary to the plan drawn up at Potsdam on July 5th. "If the Emperor's judgment was sound," he declares, "it would have been his bounden duty to tell the Austrian Emperor and his Government that the German Emperor and his Government regarded Serbia's fault as expiated, and the Austrian threat as set aside; and he should have added that the German Emperor and his Government would henceforth be compelled to regard any military measures against the kingdom of Serbia not as an act of defence but an act of aggression; and to deny the existence of any *casus foederis*." Eugen Fischer concludes that in fact the Imperial judgment was "an insincerity, hardly more than a joke, which the Emperor himself did not take seriously." Whatever one may think of this rather maliciously indul-

* The German Chancellor agreed with his master. He felt that Serbia "has given such wide satisfaction to the Austrian demands that an absolutely uncompromising attitude on the part of the Austrian Government would have to reckon with growing hostility from the public opinion of the whole of Europe." Such was the opinion which he expressed on July 28th, and which he repeated on July 30th at the session of the Cabinet Council.(12)

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gent interpretation, the fact remains that William II and his entourage were as much struck as were the *Entente* Powers by the moderation of the Belgrade Government.

The German Communication to the Quai d'Orsay

On the very day after the delivery of the Serbian reply and the rupture of diplomatic relations between Vienna and Belgrade, an incident occurred in Paris the details of which throw some light upon the intentions of the Wilhelmstrasse.

It has already been shown that the real object of the thesis of localization was to immobilize Russia, leaving Austria complete freedom of action; with the result that Russian intervention, though it might at the first blush be regarded as inevitable, could be denounced as proof of a clear and deliberate intention to disturb the peace of Europe. And the German Chancellor's instructions to Herr von Schoen, his ambassador in Paris, form part of this tactic.(14) He was instructed to make the following communication to the French Government:

On the morrow of the delivery of the Austrian ultimatum to Serbia, Berchtold had assured the Russian *chargé d'affaires* that "Austria will not demand any Serbian territory." In view of this official declaration of Austria's intention to respect the territorial integrity of Serbia and to confine herself to "the re-establishment of order," the German ambassador in Paris was instructed to state that the fate of Europe "now depends only on Russia" and the decision which she might take. Inasmuch as France like Great Britain desired the maintenance of peace, she would doubtless "exert her influence at St. Petersburg in order to urge Russia to calm."

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Herr von Schoen's communication took the Quai d'Orsay by surprise and aroused its suspicions. Why, the Quai d'Orsay wondered, should Germany ask France to calm Russia, who had always shown her moderation and her desire for peace during the whole course of the crisis? Bienvenu-Martin nevertheless did not refuse to address the desired recommendation to St. Petersburg; but he laid it down as a condition that a similar recommendation should be made by Germany to Vienna. Herr von Schoen brushed aside this condition as contrary to the thesis of localization,(15) and he found himself in this matter fully in accord with his Sovereign, who felt that no advice need be given except to Russia.(16)

In vain did the German ambassador press the Quai d'Orsay. He went so far as to propose the text of a communication to the Press affirming the existence of "the most friendly spirit" and "a sentiment of pacific solidarity" between the German and French Governments, and even expressly emphasized this feeling in a personal letter to Berthelot, the assistant-director of political affairs.(17) His urgency appeared to the Quai d'Orsay to be likely to conceal a plan to "compromise France in the eyes of Russia, so that in case of failure the responsibility for a possible war might be thrown upon Russia and France"; and "to conceal military action by Austria against Serbia intended to complete her success, by unheeded pacific protestations."(18) For was not the real object of German diplomacy to create a void around Russia, the scapegoat upon whom responsibility for the war must at all costs fall?

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The Austrian Declaration of "Territorial Disinterestedness"

We may legitimately ask ourselves whether the Austrian assurances concerning the integrity of Serbian territory could be believed; and we may also legitimately reply that Berchtold had no desire to come to a definite understanding with Russia on this matter.

Before the rupture with Serbia Berchtold certainly informed Sazonov that "the Monarchy is saturated with territory and does not covet any Serbian possessions"; and that if it were constrained to go to war with Serbia this would be a defensive struggle, and not one "for territorial gain." (19) But he afterwards gave instructions to his ambassador in St. Petersburg which clearly expressed his real intentions: he recommended the avoidance of "any formal undertaking." (20) Moreover on the very day of the declaration of war an indiscretion on the part of one of the members of the Austro-Hungarian embassy in London revealed Vienna's intention to "cut down" Serbia, and "cede portions" of her territory to Bulgaria and probably to Albania. (21) Until that moment Berlin itself was ignorant of any such intention; upon this point Vienna had concealed these private designs from her ally; and the German Chancellor, shocked by such lack of candour, taxed Austria with "intolerable duplicity" (22)—a reproach which in the course of the following days he was again to make more than once. It is clear that in these circumstances confidence in the Austro-Hungarian Government was everywhere badly shaken, and there was also another reason for suspecting the good faith of the Ballplatz which has been emphasized by Eugen Fischer in the following terms: (23)

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"Apart from the *arrière-pensée* that not only Austria-Hungary but also other neighbours might obtain Serbian territory, there was also the consideration that after the war one could impose what terms one liked, and always find 'grounds' for doing so. It was in this sense that General Conrad had expressed himself from the very first day, and now the adversaries of Austria were also aware of the 'dodge.'" Conrad as a matter of fact first put forward the suggestion on leaving the Cabinet Council of July 19th, when the decision to dismember Serbia to which the German historian refers was taken. He declared:

"Before the Balkan war the Powers also talked of maintaining the *status quo*. After the war nobody troubled about it."(24)

Germany Rejects the British Proposal for a Conference

After the Serbian reply whose moderation had made such favourable impression on the Powers, it is natural to consider the policy of the *Entente*. The object of this policy was to avoid the danger of a solution of the Austro-Serbian crisis by military action which might rapidly develop into a German-Russian crisis; and to reach a settlement in which national *amour-propre* and the political interests of the adversaries should be reconciled by diplomatic methods. The several proposals in which, as we shall see, the *Entente* Powers took the initiative were all put forward with this end in view; but they all met with the same negative reception by the Central Empires as did the original request for an extension of the forty-eight hours' time-limit accorded to Serbia for her reply to the Austrian ultimatum.

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The first of these proposals emanated from Sir Edward Grey. Anxious to stop the march towards open hostility, he put forward the idea of a conference similar to that which had assembled during the recent Balkan war: it was suggested that the ambassadors of the Great Powers in London not directly interested should meet the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs "to endeavour to find a means of preventing complications," while the various diplomatic agents should urge the Governments of Vienna, Belgrade, and St. Petersburg to suspend all military operations until the end of the conference.(25) The Foreign Secretary felt that since armed intervention by Russia must necessarily be the reply to Austrian aggression against Serbia, a general suspension of hostilities would help towards finding a compromise between the parties at issue.

France and Italy acquiesced in this proposal, and Sazonov adhered to it in principle; but as direct negotiations had been opened between the Russian Cabinet and the Austrian Cabinet and appeared to be progressing favourably he requested that their result be awaited before any further action were taken, at the same time announcing that in the event of their failure he would rally to the English proposal, or to any other "capable of leading to a peaceful settlement of the conflict."(26)

Germany however replied by a flat refusal, and she even judged it unnecessary to consult Vienna. On his own responsibility Jagow declared that any conference would in effect amount to a "court of arbitration" which could only meet at the request of both Austria and Russia. The British ambassador, to whom this statement was made,

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pointed out that the question of arbitration had not been raised; but Jagow maintained his opinion,(27) and Bethmann-Hollweg also considered that it was impossible for Germany "to bring Austria before a European tribunal in the matter of her dispute with Serbia." (28)

The German Ministers invoked various arguments in explanation of this blunt rejection of the British proposal by the Wilhelmstrasse; the encouraging news about the conversations directly in progress between St. Petersburg and Vienna, their fear lest the conference should not offer a sufficient guarantee of impartiality, and their own commitments towards Austria. It was in these circumstances that Jules Cambon, the French ambassador in Berlin, adjured Jagow "in the name of humanity" not to assume any personal responsibility "for the disasters" which he was letting loose. His appeal however was in vain.(29)

Austria, on the Advice of Germany, Refuses to Negotiate on the Basis of the Serbian Reply

The direct negotiations between Austria and Russia to which Sazonov referred had made scarcely any advance. The Russian Minister drew the attention of the Austrian ambassador to the conditions of the ultimatum, which struck him as capable of modification; he told the German ambassador that he was "ready to go to the limits of conciliation in regard to Austria," and that she must be provided with "a golden bridge"; he invoked German "co-operation"—"means must be found of giving Serbia a deserved lesson, while at the same time respecting her rights of sovereignty." It was therefore a question of

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an understanding between Austria and Russia on the basis of the Serbian reply.(30)

Berchtold immediately objected, announcing his absolute refusal to entertain such negotiations. Since the Serbian reply had been qualified by Austria as "unacceptable" it could not be declared to be made the subject of negotiation, which would moreover offend public opinion in Austria and Hungary: and he added that in any case war had just been declared on Serbia (which, as we shall see, was true) in order to put an end to her "provocation" and that a new situation had thus arisen.(31)

Sir Edward Grey had for his part conceived an idea similar to that of Sazonov, which he communicated to the Wilhelmstrasse through the medium of Lichnowsky, the German ambassador in London, whose telegram was of such a nature as to make a strong impression on Bethmann-Hollweg.(32) Sir Edward Grey, Lichnowsky reported, said that if Austria would not be satisfied with the very conciliatory reply to her ultimatum which she had received she would demonstrate her intention of seeking only a "pretext" for attacking Serbia; and that this "direct provocation" to Russia would lead to "the most terrible war that Europe has ever seen." He requested Germany's mediation to persuade Austria to accept the Serbian reply "either as satisfactory, or as a basis of negotiation." Lichnowsky added that "for the first time" Sir Edward Grey was showing himself "displeased."

As a result of this disturbing communication Bethmann-Hollweg transmitted the London proposal to Vienna for Austria's "examination." But he did not support it. He contented himself with asking "to be informed of" Berchtold's "views" upon Sir Edward Grey's sugges-

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tion,(33) at the same time informing the British Minister that he could not advise Austria to "sanction *a posteriori*" a reply which from the outset she had "rejected as inadequate." (34) He thus upon his own authority brushed the proposal aside.

But in any case, if Berchtold were in any danger of mistaking what Berlin expected of him a report from his ambassador in Berlin about a conversation which he had just had with Jagow would soon have informed him. The German Secretary of State conveyed to the Austro-Hungarian Minister "the most categorical assurance that he did not identify himself in any way with these (the British) proposals"; that he was even opposed to their being taken into consideration; and that he communicated them only in order not to antagonize Great Britain and lead her to take sides with Russia and France.(35) The German communication was therefore a pure formality, made simply for the sake of appearances. Berchtold raised the two objections already mentioned: first, that the Serbian reply made reservations on most points; and second, that in view of the state of war which had supervened between the Monarchy and Serbia, this reply was "already put out of date by events." (36) Accordingly he was no more disposed to accept Sir Edward Grey's proposal than that of Sazonov.

CHAPTER VIII

THE DECLARATION OF WAR ON SERBIA (JULY 28TH)

THE Austrian declaration of war on Serbia, already twice referred to by Berchtold, took place on July 28th.

In this connection two points must be made clear: firstly, that the declaration of war was made under pressure from the German Government; and secondly, that the text of the declaration in the form in which it was submitted by Berchtold for the signature of Francis Joseph contained a false allegation.

Germany Insists upon the Opening of Hostilities

The Wilhelmstrasse and the German Emperor saw with great dissatisfaction that the situation was developing so slowly, and they made this plain to the Ballplatz even before the receipt of the Serbian reply. On July 25th Szögyény, the Austro-Hungarian ambassador, made an important communication to Berchtold upon the state of mind in Berlin.⁽¹⁾ He said:

1.—“It is taken for granted here that a negative reply from Serbia will be immediately followed by our declaration of war, accompanied by military action.”

2.—“It is felt here that any delay in the opening of hostilities would, on account of the interference of other Powers, be very dangerous.”

3.—“It is urgently advised” that Austria should “act at once, and present the world with a *fait accompli*.”

The firm attitude taken up by Berlin was therefore

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known to Berchtold and his entourage during the three days which elapsed between the receipt of the Serbian reply and the Austrian declaration of war. Nevertheless Conrad, as Chief of Staff, would have liked this declaration to be still further delayed because the slow rate of concentration would not permit him to begin his advance before August 12th, and he was anxious not to start the campaign with insufficient forces in hand. But his resistance was temporary only, and soon gave way before the pressure of the political situation. The German ambassador in Vienna, who was present and took part in Berchtold's first conversation with Conrad on this subject (July 26th), was therefore able to inform Bethmann-Hollweg that war would be officially declared the next day or the day after. Tschirschky also gave the official reason for the Austrian decision: it had been taken "mainly to forestall any attempt at intervention." (2)

Such was the unsuspected frame of mind in which the proposals of Sazonov and Sir Edward Grey were received by the Austrian and German Governments, and it explains their unsympathetic reception. In order clearly to understand the nature of the Austrian decision it is necessary to emphasize the confidential information conveyed by Berchtold to the Wilhelmstrasse: namely, that war operations would not begin until "the going in action of troops is completed, so that a strong decisive blow may then be dealt." (3) This secret reservation proves that a step so grave as the declaration of war was decided upon in order to give satisfaction to Berlin.

Here again it is of interest to record Hermann Lutz's opinion. (4) He condemns the optimism, resulting from "a gross miscalculation of the general situation," which

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the Wilhelmstrasse showed when it "blindly" persevered along the path on which it had started, and its excessive levity in refusing to lend ear to the numerous warnings which "came from all cardinal points about the gravity of the situation," and in urging Austria to declare war on Serbia at such short notice—a step which was bound to lead to "European complications." "It would have been better," he goes on, "above all when the Serbian reply became known, to urge Austria in the most pressing terms to postpone her declaration of war." At the end of his discussion of German policy on July 26th and 27th he recalls a passage in the diplomatic correspondence of the Wilhelmstrasse, and draws this conclusion: "In diplomacy, any adviser incurs responsibility for the consequence of his advice" (an opinion with which Secretary of State Jagow, in April 1913, expressly identified himself in connection with Austria). The German Government, Lutz adds, "therefore cannot escape its co-responsibility for Austria's declaration of war on Serbia." He further adds that, "with singular blindness," Germany agreed, and even contributed by her advice, to the creation through the Austrian invasion of Serbia, of a "critical" situation. Lutz declares that this was "a method of dealing with the situation by which the vital interests of the German people were profoundly affected, and upon which one can only pronounce a severe judgment."

Hermann Lutz's opinion was corroborated in advance by the four experts whose statement Herr von Brockdorff-Rantzau, head of the German delegation at Versailles, communicated to Clemenceau, in his capacity as president of the Peace Conference on the 28th of May, 1919.

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These experts, Hans Delbrück, Albert Mendelsohn-Bartholdy, Max Montgelas, and Max Weber expressed themselves as follows:

"Germany approved Austria's intention to make an end of the agitation in favour of a greater Serbia by action which should be supported by force of arms if the necessity arose. It would have been of decisive importance if, from the moment of the receipt of the Serbian reply on (July) 27th, the Vienna Cabinet had been prevented from taking any irrevocable step; for from that date the Government was under the impression that Serbia had shown the most conciliatory spirit."(5)

But Berlin did not merely fail to "prevent" Vienna's action: on the contrary, she strongly encouraged it.

The False Pretext for the Declaration of War

Serbia, despite her desire for conciliation, was certain (as the Crown Prince, in his anxiety, wrote to the Czar) that she would be attacked by Austria. If she ordered the mobilization of her army even before handing over her reply to Austria's ultimatum, such action, as Hermann Lutz admits, could only be regarded in the situation in which she found herself as "a legitimate measure of defence."(6)

The Viennese Government could not find a *casus belli* in this action on the part of Serbia, and having no such justification it was obliged to invent one. When Berchtold requested the authorization of his Sovereign for the dispatch of a telegram to Belgrade, he presented the Emperor with a text in which Serbian troops were accused of having "attacked a detachment of the (Austrian) army." In the telegram which was actually dispatched to Serbia,

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however, this charge disappeared. Berchtold explained its omission to Francis Joseph on the ground that the news of this attack had not been confirmed, and that only one report had been received about "an exchange of shots of no great importance, which certainly did not seem to justify an act of State of such gravity." Thus he had taken it upon himself to suppress this passage in the telegram, in the hope that the Emperor would afterwards approve his action.(7) We are not in possession of any testimony as to the reaction of Francis Joseph upon this revelation that his Minister had obtained his signature under false pretences.

The fact remained that war was declared on Serbia because she had not given a "satisfactory answer" to the Austrian Note of July 23rd.(8) And in the examination of Berchtold's reasons for desiring to invoke any other ground for the declaration of war, it is interesting to note that the British ambassador in Austria had already pointed out that "postponement or prevention of war with Serbia would undoubtedly be a great disappointment in this country, which has gone wild with joy at the prospect of war."(9)

The inevitable result of the Austrian decision (which it would be more correct to call the Austro-German decision), the repercussion upon the international situation of what Eugen Fischer describes as "the decisive act,"(10) had been foreseen alike in Berlin and Vienna: the armed intervention of Russia. Berchtold in particular anticipated this intervention. He instructed his ambassador in St. Petersburg as to the line of the action to be followed if it should happen that Russia, "after mature reflection," decided to "withstand even the foaming torrent of Slav solidarity." But what he expected was war.

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Adopting the same tactics as those of the German diplomats, he instructed his ambassador that if Russia should think "the present moment propitious for a final settlement of accounts with the Central Empires and should show herself henceforward bent upon war," then there was nothing to do but await the decision of Fate.(11)

Thus Berchtold also attempted to throw the responsibility for future events upon Russia. Hermann Lutz however, who is familiar with the diplomatic documents, attributes an "unfortunate provocative effect" to the Austrian declaration of war;(12) and his opinion is in strict accordance with the statement in the *White Book* distributed to the Reichstag on August 4, 1914.

"We were fully aware," Bethmann-Hollweg solemnly declared, "that any military action whatever on the part of Austria against Serbia might have Russian intervention as its immediate consequence, and therefore might involve us also in war by reason of our obligations."(13)

This statement is no less than a recognition that the Austrian declaration of war against Serbia was a challenge to Russia. And Russia was not slow to take it up.

CHAPTER IX

THE RUSSIAN MOBILIZATION

FROM the moment when the decision to have recourse to force was taken—a decision which, as the two Central Empires were aware, must be fatal to the peace of Europe—the military leaders responsible for national security were to exert an ever-increasing influence upon the Governments in every country; now supporting, now dominating, and now destroying the influence of the diplomats. This was the deciding factor in all the events which took place during the last three days of the month of July.

The Russian Pre-Mobilization Measures

Immediately after the ultimatum which had so deeply affected him, Sazonov felt it necessary to take counsel with his colleagues in the Russian Ministry as to the requisite measures to be proposed for the approval of the Czar. Sazonov was in no way animated by desire for war, and the Wilhelmstrasse itself recognized this fact down to the very last day; as for his Sovereign, it was common knowledge that he was passionately attached to peace—but events were finally to outweigh the personal desires of both.

At a Cabinet Council held on July 24th, in the absence of the Emperor, and at another held on July 25th at which he presided, a decision in principle was taken.⁽¹⁾ The Czar approved a proposal for the mobilization of thirteen army corps against Austria, but he stipulated

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that actual Austrian aggression against Serbia must have taken place before any action were taken; and he required that such action be dependent upon the consent of the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs, the responsible political Minister.

It was further decided to take some immediate precautions, intended to avoid any confusion being caused by mobilization if it eventually became necessary; and arrangements were made to proceed secretly to pre-mobilization, which implied the requisite dispositions for what the regulations called "the period preparatory to war."

These Russian measures did not strike the Austrian Chief of Staff, Conrad, as excessive. "This," he said, "may still not necessarily mean mobilization";(2) and according to the Russian authorities the preparations which had been taken did not signify any aggressive intention against Germany. Two days later the German military *attaché* in St. Petersburg reported to his Government that according to a statement by Soukhomlinov, the Russian Minister for War, it was only in the event of an Austrian invasion of Serbia that Russia would proceed to mobilization, and even then only in the districts bordering upon the Austrian frontier.(3)

By thus subordinating war measures to the progress of events Nicholas II's Ministers believed they were diminishing the risks of an armed conflict and giving peace its last chance; and it is remarkable that they believed the best hope of preserving it was the conciliatory spirit with which they credited Germany. This feeling of confidence in Germany struck Pourtalès himself, the German ambassador in St. Petersburg, to such

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an extent that he wrote, "the dominating note here is hope of German intervention and the mediation of His Majesty the Emperor William II."(4)

Russia Decides on Mobilization against Austria

Nevertheless, the progress of events seemed less and less likely to lead to a peaceful settlement. After the anxiety aroused by the Austrian ultimatum to Serbia and the rupture of diplomatic relations, the Austrian declaration of war on Serbia had the effect of clarifying Russian opinion. The German military *attaché* at the Court of St. Petersburg then informed his Government that whereas a peaceful solution would still have been regarded as possible the day before, and especially after the reception of the Serbian reply to the Austrian ultimatum, "in the Czar's entourage general war" was now regarded "as almost inevitable. Whereas, before the publication of the Serbian Note it was felt that Austria was entitled to demand satisfaction from Serbia, now—after the Austrian rejection of the Serbian reply, which is here considered as very conciliatory—the conviction prevails that Austria has acted in bad faith, that she is seeking to provoke war and that it is war which she desires."

But Russia, the German *attaché* added, did not want war. "There is still a desire to avoid it, and it is regretted that no Power should have succeeded in dissuading Austria from this dangerous step."(5)

The news of the Austrian declaration of war on Serbia made a profound impression on Sazonov in particular. All testimonies agree in emphasizing it. Pourtales himself affirmed that the Austrian declaration of war overwhelmed the Russian Minister(6) and shattered the

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optimism which he had hitherto shown. He could no longer be in doubt about Austria's intentions, and began to suspect the bad influence of Germany; he also now appreciated the fact that a general war was inevitable. On the next day therefore, July 29th, he decided to proclaim mobilization against Austria. The Wilhelmstrasse were informed of this decision, and at the same time the absence of any Russian intention to attack Germany was confirmed.(7)

The Opposition of the Russian Military Authorities to Partial Mobilization

Sazonov's decision was to encounter the resistance of the Russian authorities charged with carrying it out.(8)

General Janukhevitch, the Chief of the General Staff, and Dobrorolski, the head of the mobilization service, made serious technical objections against the suggestion to mobilize only that part of the Russian forces required to act against Austria. The Russian military authorities were aware of the obligations which resulted from the Triple Alliance and had drawn up a plan of operations directed against Germany as well as against Austria; they had therefore made preparations for a general mobilization only. The structure of their plan involved such an interdependence of military areas that, even if they limited themselves to mobilization in those areas which bordered on Austria-Hungary, they would have to borrow technical specialist sections, munitions, and reservists from other areas. They pointed out the disorder and confusion to be feared if, once partial mobilization were in progress, circumstances should dictate general mobilization. In addition, the difficulties of

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railway transport in an Empire of such vast extent, where the transport organization contemplated only general mobilization, had to be taken into account. In view of the possibility that war with Austria-Hungary might shortly be complicated by war with Germany also the Russian General Staff deemed it dangerous to proceed to mobilization in two stages, because the operations undertaken in the course of the first stage would hamper those which would become necessary if it were decided to set the second in motion also; and declared that "any partial mobilization would have the effect of ruining general mobilization."

It is therefore clear that there were two currents of opinion in St. Petersburg on July 29th. Sazonov and the Emperor wanted to adhere to the plan of partial mobilization contemplated at the Cabinet Council of July 25th, which after the receipt of the news of the Austrian declaration of war on Serbia, Sazonov had announced in a circular telegram to his ambassadors. According to his express declaration this mobilization was in no way aimed against Germany, and was intended simply to intimidate Austria and prevent her attempting to obtain a military victory over Serbia which must involve Russia also. But the Russian High Command, fearing the danger of partial mobilization, insisted upon general mobilization—which seemed to them to be essential in view of the extreme probability of war with Germany.

The Communication of the German Ambassador

Sazonov was finally over-persuaded by the High Command, and his influence with the Czar prevailed: Nicholas II was convinced of the necessity, and signed

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an order mobilizing all his forces, to take effect on July 30th.

To understand Sazonov's action we must take note of the visit of the German ambassador, who called upon him between seven and eight o'clock in the evening of July 29th.(9) It followed upon various conversations which had taken place on the same day between the Russian Minister and the diplomatic representatives of Germany and Austria.

The German ambassador, Pourtalès, had already twice informed Sazonov that Russian mobilization against Austria would, in view of the obligations of the alliance, involve German intervention. But while Sazonov and the Austrian ambassador, Szápáry, were calmly discussing the situation a telephone message suddenly advised the Russian Minister of the bombardment of Belgrade by Austrian monitors. "His manner," the Austrian ambassador reported, "suddenly changed"; "if you take such action," he said, "of what use are further conversations?" Szápáry stated that he left Sazonov in a state of "extreme agitation."

It was at this moment that Pourtalès paid a further call. He was charged by his Government to draw Sazonov's "most serious attention to the fact that if Russian mobilization continued, Germany would be forced to mobilize also, and that such action would make it almost impossible to prevent the outbreak of European war."

In his report on this visit, Pourtalès remarked upon the great emotion which his communication aroused in Sazonov. The fact was that Sazonov's last hopes were foundering, as he himself put it,(10) he no longer had "the least straw" to which to cling. And his anxiety lest

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Berlin should intend aggression was intensified because Pourtalès's communication was not in line with the earlier declarations of the Wilhelmstrasse, which had hitherto accepted the partial mobilization against Austria as natural and to be expected.

Two days earlier Jagow had told the Russian *chargé d'affaires* in Berlin: "We shall mobilize if Russia mobilizes on our frontier, or if the Russian troops invade Austrian territory." On the same day he informed Jules Cambon that Germany would intervene only in case of a Russian attack on Austria; and he spoke in the same sense to the British ambassador, drawing a distinction between Russian mobilization in the south, to which Germany had no objection, and Russian mobilization in the north.(11)

Apart from this disturbing contradiction in the attitude of the Wilhelmstrasse, Sazonov had been deeply impressed by the fact that though Pourtalès emphasized the "friendly" character of his communication, the tone in which he gave it implied a challenge; and the Russian Minister could not avoid the painful impression that he was being threatened.(12)

It was in accordance with instructions from Bethmann-Hollweg that Pourtalès had paid the visit which made Sazonov so anxious. The German Chancellor's telegram to Pourtalès has been sometimes described as an ultimatum, but this description strikes Eugen Fischer(13) as too strong; nevertheless he says that it must be regarded as a "pre-ultimatum." His opinion is worth quoting and he considers that if she had decided to make war on Austria military considerations would oblige Russia to mobilize the whole of her army, since Germany made

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no concealment of her intention to assist her ally. The action of the German Chancellor himself therefore provided a clear justification for the Russian Government to order general mobilization; and we may note that Eugen Fischer attaches value to the arguments of the Russian General Staff.

The "Nicky"—"Willy" Correspondence

The order for Russian general mobilization was not however executed, because the Czar cancelled it upon the evening of the day on which he had consented to give his signature; and this change was due to the personal influence of the Kaiser.

We have already seen that the Czar and his entourage were confident that the German Sovereign would exercise a salutary influence upon the Viennese Government. Despite the fact that the situation grew progressively worse Nicholas II still hoped that the Kaiser's good will might yet stop his ally on the brink of the abyss, and as had happened before on more than one occasion, the Czar had written personally to him.

When Nicholas II received a telegram from "Willy" in which the Kaiser informed him that in conformity with the "cordial and affectionate friendship" which united them, he would do his best to persuade the Austrians to enter into direct, frank negotiation with the Russians, this declaration made a favourable impression.⁽¹⁴⁾ Nevertheless the Czar could not fail to be struck by the lack of harmony between this letter and the tone and purport of Pourtalès's communication. He asked the Kaiser for some explanation of this "divergence," and added that "it would be just to submit the

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Austro-Serbian problem to the Hague Conference,"(15) which is sufficient to prove that he still aimed at a peaceful solution.

While this telegram was on its way he received another from the Kaiser in which William II (still anxious to lay the burden of responsibility upon St. Petersburg) defined the policy which in his opinion Russia should adopt. He declared that she had only to "remain a spectator of the Austro-Serbian conflict, and thus avoid plunging Europe into the most horrible war ever witnessed." He ended with a sentence which was practically a confirmation of his Chancellor's "pre-ultimatum":

"Military measures on the part of Russia, which might be considered as threatening to Austria" (here clearly the Kaiser meant the merely partial mobilization which Jagow had recognized as legitimate) "would obviously precipitate a calamity which we are both anxious to avoid, and would compromise the *rôle* of mediator which I have gladly adopted in response to your appeal to my friendship and for my assistance."(16)

It is a curious thing that it was this message which made "Nicky" rescind his decision. He read into it a kind of solemn promise on the Kaiser's part, and expressly invoked William II's "word of honour" when he ordered the cancellation of the decision in favour of general mobilization.(17) But this was as far as he was prepared to go; in spite of the final sentence in the telegram from Berlin he confirmed the partial mobilization against Austria which had already been announced to the Powers the day before. The order for this mobilization was issued on July 29th at midnight.(18)

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Russia Decides on General Mobilization

Nevertheless the Russian military leaders, more and more obsessed by a sense of their responsibility and more and more convinced that Germany was acting in close concert with her ally and preparing herself to open hostilities, continued to emphasize the great confusion which would result if general mobilization should be required while partial mobilization was in progress. It remained to obtain the assent of the Czar, who had a horror of war; and on the morning of July 30th he refused even to discuss the matter with the Chief of Staff and the Minister for War. Sazonov managed to secure an audience in the course of the afternoon. He put two arguments before his Sovereign: first, the technical argument of the military experts; and secondly, a political argument, namely that France might be painfully surprised by the conduct of an ally who showed herself indifferent to the German menace and confined her action to the taking of defensive measures against Austria.

After a dramatic conversation lasting an hour, Sazonov obtained the Czar's authority to order general mobilization. It was then about four o'clock, and the order was carried into effect in the course of the evening. In St. Petersburg the red proclamation bearing the Imperial *ukase* was posted up on the walls at dawn on the morning of July 31st.(19)

The Real Import of the Russian Mobilization

The Czar has often been blamed for his decision, and it has been said that war was bound to be its sequel. But this judgment is clearly contradicted by the opinion

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formulated even in 1914 by the highest German military authority.

On July 30th Moltke, the German Chief of Staff, told Vienna that "the Russian mobilization was as yet no ground for mobilization. There must first be a state of open war between the (Austro-Hungarian) Monarchy and Russia," and von Moltke's advice to his colleague Conrad in this connection was reinforced by a comment which refuted in advance the complaint later made against the St. Petersburg Government. He said: "Unlike Russian mobilizations and demobilizations which have become quite common, German mobilization would inevitably lead to war. Do not declare war on Russia, but await Russian aggression." (20)

Thus Moltke clearly declared that it was not Russian but German mobilization which must lead to war; and Hermann Lutz is therefore going against the opinion of the most highly qualified authority when he sees in the Russian mobilization an "irrevocable step" and declares that in consequence of it "the world war was henceforth really let loose." On the admission of the German military leaders it was not the Czar's decision which was bound in logic to determine the outbreak of hostilities, and—in Eugen Fischer's tendentious formula—"force war almost immediately." (21) Moreover when William II requested him to suspend his preparations the Czar certainly replied that technical reasons made it impossible; but at the same time he gave the Kaiser his "solemn word" that so long as any possibility of negotiation remained the Russian army would not commit "any provocative act." The Kaiser refused to give the same undertaking. (22)

CHAPTER X

THE FRANCO-RUSSIAN CONVERSATIONS AT ST. PETERSBURG

As the Russian decisions were taken about a week after the departure of Poincaré and Viviani from St. Petersburg, it may naturally be asked whether these decisions were not indirectly due to some encouragement or assurance given by them to Nicolas II's Government.

The Pacific Policy of France in 1912, 1913, 1914

Before attempting to answer this question, we must remember that up to the time of the French statesmen's visit to St. Petersburg the policy of the Quai d'Orsay had always been guided by perfectly clear considerations. While France was firmly resolved to fulfil the obligations of her alliance with Russia (that is to say to take up arms in case "Russia should be attacked by Germany or by Austria supported by Germany"), she had constantly exerted herself (in 1912, 1913 and in 1914) to dissuade her ally from any initiative not concerted in advance between the two Governments.

Particularly in the case of Balkan questions, which were universally regarded as likely to lead to general war, France was insistent that this always imminent danger should not be precipitated as the result of any heedless or clumsy step which would force her to intervene despite herself. Undoubtedly St. Petersburg was perfectly aware that even French Ministries of the extreme Left would never deny the usefulness and value of the

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Russian alliance, or refuse to fulfil its obligations; but it was also clearly understood that French Cabinets of less advanced opinions were no less anxious than the extreme Left to go to the utmost limit in order to avoid any risk of conflict. Such men as Doumergue, Viviani and Poincaré took exactly the same view, and there is abundant evidence in French as well as Russian diplomatic correspondence to support the fact.

The question must arise as to whether any change of attitude occurred at the time of the visit to St. Petersburg and whether the French statesmen can be accused of urging a more aggressive attitude upon their Russian colleagues, in an ever more precarious European situation. Did President Poincaré, as has been alleged, "strengthen the hands" of the partisans of strong action on the part of Russia against Austria? Was there then (as has been believed) some kind of agreement between the leaders of French and Russian policy, of which Paléologue, the French ambassador, was aware and the import of which he exaggerated?

The Conversations of Poincaré and Viviani in St. Petersburg

The chief documents at the disposal of the historian are the *Memoirs* of Paléologue, and particularly Poincaré's own *Memoirs*, together with a telegram from the British ambassador, Buchanan, to his Government which has been often quoted.⁽¹⁾ To what conclusions do they lead us?

The French Prime Minister's impression, after a preliminary conversation with Sazonov on July 20th, was optimistic. The Russian Minister had received no news

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which led him to "fear any serious sequel to the double murder at Sarajevo." The Czar was of the same opinion, and in the course of a long conversation with Poincaré on July 21st he made no reference to any immediate danger. "Not for one moment did the vision of war pass before his eyes," though indeed Austria's "enigmatic" silence disturbed him a little. "But he did not say one word which betrayed serious anxiety, nor one word which led me to suppose that he believed in the imminence of a European conflagration." At this moment the French and Russians alike were still unaware of the plans and decisions of the Central Empires.

Poincaré had a conversation the same day with Buchanan, who was also uneasy about the Vienna mystery, and afraid of a "violent" Austrian Note to Serbia; and he told the President of the French Republic that Sir Edward Grey contemplated direct negotiations between Austria and Russia. Poincaré thought this method dangerous at the moment (doubtless on the ground of an open conflict between national susceptibilities and individual rivalries), and would rather have seen France and England address counsels of moderation to Vienna.(2) He had further had a short conversation with the Serbian Minister, Spalaikovitch, who had received "very bad" news from Belgrade and was pessimistic; whereupon the French President told him that France would exert herself to "avoid conflict."

Poincaré's Conversation with the Austrian Ambassador

But what is usually emphasized as significant is the French President's conversation with the Austrian ambassador, Szápáry.(3)

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Of his own accord Poincaré raised the question of Austro-Serbian relations. He remarked that if she were to call the responsibility of the Belgrade Government in question, Austria would require to be in possession of "definite, striking" proofs; and that in the unlikely event of her proposing to use the Sarajevo outrage as a "pretext" against Serbia, she "should not forget that Serbia had friends" ready to take action in her defence, and that peace might therefore be gravely imperilled.

In the course of this conversation the French President recalled a recent affair in which the Austro-Hungarian consul, Prochaska, had been falsely represented as the victim of violence at the hands of Serbian troops when they entered Albania. His reference to this incident provoked a strong protest on the part of the Austrian ambassador. When they parted, Poincaré expressed the hope that the investigation into the Sarajevo outrage would not lead to any "disturbing results."

Szápáry immediately telegraphed to the Ballplatz to denounce the lack of "tact" of the French President, whose expressions he declared, "sounded like a threat"; and who in his opinion would exercise in St. Petersburg "an influence which will be anything but calming."

Meanwhile, in a drawer of the desk at which the ambassador drafted these views, lay the text of the Austrian Note to Serbia; which Szápáry had read and which he was instructed to communicate to Sazonov the next day.

Even if what Poincaré had said were to be construed as a threat (when it might as legitimately be interpreted as a counsel of prudence), one may well ask what difference that would make to the history of the causes of the war;

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inasmuch as, at the moment when this conversation took place, the Austrian and German decisions to act against Serbia were taken and already in course of execution.

Sazonov's Pacific Instructions to his Ambassador in Vienna

The historian moreover has at his disposal a document by which he can estimate the effect produced upon the Russian Government by the presence of the head of the French Government: namely, Sazonov's telegram to his ambassador in Vienna.

He instructed the ambassador to point out to Berchtold the danger of demands impossible of acceptance—"incompatible with the dignity of Serbia"—such as reports to St. Petersburg indicated that Austria might put forward. He conveyed to the ambassador the feelings of Viviani, who also would find "any unjustifiable humiliation of Serbia" intolerable.

Sazonov added that he was aware that Great Britain equally "condemns the intention attributed to Austria." As the French and British ambassadors had been ordered to bring moderating pressure to bear on the Ballplatz, he gave the same instructions to the Russian ambassador: but in order not to offend the susceptibilities of the Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs and "to avoid any aggravation of the question," Sazonov recommended his ambassador to come to an understanding with his French and British colleagues. All three of them, however, should guard against the danger of giving Berchtold any impression of "combined" or "simultaneous" communications. Finally Sazonov declared: "I am not without hope that reason will prevail over belli-

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cose tendencies in Vienna, and that timely warning by the Great Powers may still serve to dissuade Austria from any irrevocable measures.”(4)

The Toasts Proposed by Poincaré and the Czar

The toasts exchanged at the farewell dinner on July 23rd—the day of the dispatch of the Austrian ultimatum to Serbia—provide further testimony as to the state of mind of the statesmen assembled in St. Petersburg.

The President of the French Republic spoke first. He recalled “the indissoluble alliance” and “the regular collaboration” which had long existed between the two Governments; their common ideal of peace in strength, honour, and “dignity”; and in the presence of such possible and immediate danger he obviously intended to remind the Central Empires in measured terms that any aggressive action on their part would find France and Russia firmly united. Nor did the Czar’s reply, and his declarations of “the faithful friendship” and “cordial sympathy” of his country for France, his reference to “the concerted action” of their diplomacy and “brotherhood” of their armies, and “their common ideal of peace, conscious of their strength,” strike any warlike note.

Speaking the next day (July 24th) to Pourtalès, Sazonov emphasized the pacific character of these speeches. The German ambassador recognized that they were not disturbing, and merely added that he could not say as much for the comments of the Press.(5)

The Official Communiqué

We now come to the document which bound the two Governments, namely the *communiqué* in which the

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conversations of the previous days were officially summed up, and of which a preliminary draft had been made by Paléologue. It affirmed the "perfect concordance" of "views" of the two Governments and their "intentions for the maintenance of European equilibrium, especially in the Balkan peninsula."

When it was submitted to the French visitors, this draft struck them as committing France too far "in following Russian policy in the Balkans." They therefore modified it in accordance with the desire, expressly enunciated by Poincaré and Viviani, to "leave the future unmortgaged," to "underline our pacific intentions," and to "further safeguard our liberty of action"—phrases which were the very opposite of any encouragement to war. The final version of the *communiqué* thus arrived at simply affirmed the two Governments' "complete community" of "views about the various problems which regard for general peace and European equilibrium create for the Powers, especially in the East." (6) There is to be found in it no indication of that "anything but calming" influence which the Austro-Hungarian ambassador attributed in advance to the President of the French Republic, at a moment when he was already aware of the text of his own Government's ultimatum to Serbia. The *communiqué* reveals no more than an effort to prevent Russia alone undertaking any Balkan adventure, or rashly involving her ally.

The Testimony of the British Ambassador

There exists also another contemporary testimony to the St. Petersburg conversations, namely the telegram which Buchanan, the British ambassador, dispatched to Sir

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Edward Grey on July 24th after being taken into the confidence of Sazonov and Paléologue. He said that from the conversations of the last few days three things had resulted:

1.—“Perfect community of views on the various problems with which the Powers are confronted as regards the maintenance of general peace and balance of power in Europe, more especially in the East.” (This was the formula of the *communiqué*.)

2.—“Decision to take action at Vienna, with a view to the prevention of a demand for explanations or any summons equivalent to an intervention in the internal affairs of Serbia, which the latter would be justified in regarding as an attack on her sovereignty and independence.”

It was precisely for this reason, and with this object, that concordant instructions had been dispatched to the three diplomatic representatives of the *Entente* in Vienna, in order if possible to prevent Austria from taking a step which was bound to lead to general war.

3.—“Solemn affirmation of the obligations imposed by the alliance of the two countries.” This referred to the declarations contained in the toasts of the two Heads of State, and the allusion was made with the object of reminding Austria of their mutual obligations and placing her clearly face to face with her responsibilities.

The Russian Cabinet Council (July 24th)

It is important to note that on the very same day (July 24th) a Russian Cabinet Council took place, at which it was decided to advise Serbia to act with moderation and withdraw her troops into the interior of the

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country without attempting to resist invasion; and to request Vienna to grant an extension of the forty-eight hours' time-limit which she had imposed for the Serbian reply, in order to give time for the pacifying influence of the Powers to have effect.

Such a decision manifestly had no aggressive character which could be imputed to French influence in St. Petersburg; and the same conclusion follows inevitably from Sazonov's statement,(7) in which he declared that he was ready to pursue negotiations for the maintenance of peace "even if the Austro-Hungarian Government should proceed to action against Serbia." He further proposed on his own account a direct exchange of views between Vienna and St. Petersburg on the subject of the Austrian ultimatum.

The French Government's Telegram

On his way back from St. Petersburg Viviani telegraphed from Stockholm to Paris. He said that he was sending instructions to Paul Cambon, the French ambassador in London, as well as to Paléologue in St. Petersburg to seek for diplomatic means of avoiding a conflict. In his opinion Serbia should lose no time in giving Austria satisfaction in connection with any facts that might be proved.(8) As soon as he had landed at Dunkirk he made known his own adherence to the British suggestion of mediation;(9) a telegram from him on July 29th and another sent on the same day by Bienvenu-Martin were both to this effect.(10)

Thus the action of the French Government plainly gives no indication of a desire to influence Russia towards war.

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German and Austrian Witnesses to the Pacific Spirit of France

There are also German and Austrian statements as to the state of mind of those in control of French policy and of French public opinion as a whole, which are valuable from their very origin. The German shipowner Ballin (a personal friend of the Kaiser's) declared on his return from a visit to England on July 27th that the French Government was so anxious that its embassy in London was "singing quite small" and wanted to avoid war at any price.(11)

On July 28th the Austrian ambassador in Paris informed the Ballplatz that "nobody (in France) really wants war"; that everybody regards the prospect of it with "resignation," that "the Government and its (Parliamentary) majority will certainly not go so far as war"; and that there is general "disappointment that Serbia's conciliatory spirit, which has been carried to the very limit and is quite prepared for a considerable humiliation, has failed to attain its object"; more especially "because they (the French) consider it a triumph to have been able to persuade Serbia to go so far."(12)

On July 29th the German ambassador to France, Herr von Schoen, clearly stated that: "Viviani refuses to give up hope of the maintenance of peace, which everybody here sincerely desires."(13) This was the very day upon which the French President and the Premier returned to Paris. On the next day, the Austrian ambassador still found Viviani "pacific and conciliatory."(14)

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The French Promise of Support and the Moderating Advice of Viviani

It is true that Paléologue gave Sazonov a promise of France's full co-operation as an ally; and it was to this promise that the Russian Minister referred when, after Pourtalès's disturbing communication, he announced his decision to hasten Russian preparations in view of the imminent prospect of war; and for which he thanked the Quai d'Orsay, as a declaration "especially valuable in present circumstances." (15) It is possible that this promise "strengthened the hands" of Sazonov. What is in any case certain is that the decision of the Russian Minister was the result of the German ambassador's communication, which he regarded as a threat.

Be that as it may, Viviani lost no time in clarifying the French position. France, he wrote, would not shirk the duties of her alliance; but in the interests of general peace and in view of the fact that conversations were in progress among the Powers less directly involved, "I think it would be desirable that, in any measures of precaution and defence she may see fit to set in motion, Russia should not at present take any step which would offer Germany a pretext for general or partial mobilization of her forces." These instructions to Paléologue were approved by the French Cabinet. (16)

The Statement of Messimy, Minister for War

It has been suggested that these dispositions in French official circles were to some extent contradicted by a certain conversation which Messimy, the Minister for War, had with Isvolsky, the Russian ambassador in Paris. According to Isvolsky's statement, (17) the same idea was

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expressed both by de Margerie, director of political affairs at the Quai d'Orsay, and by Messimy. The former recommended that, "in view of the conversations which are in progress with the object of safeguarding peace," the Russian Government should give its military preparations "the least open and least provocative form." Messimy advised the Russian Government to declare itself ready "to slow down its mobilization temporarily in the higher interests of peace"; but to continue and even "increase" such measures, while at the same time "abstaining as much as possible from any mass movements of troops."

These were not incitements to an attack on Germany, but simply a commentary on the instructions sent to Paléologue by Viviani. In fact, in a note written later at his inspiration, Viviani stated that he recalled having seen a report from the military *attaché* to the Russian embassy in Isvolsky's hands, defining the manner in which, according to the advice of the French Minister for War, these instructions were to be interpreted.

What increases the value of this explanation is the fact that Paléologue was requested by Viviani, in the event of Austria's refusing to accept the conditions formulated by Sazonov "in their present form," to get into consultation with Sazonov—"without counteracting the British proposals"—in search of "a formula which might provide a basis for conversation and compromise." (18)

Paléologue's Telegrams on the Russian Mobilization

These various documents throw some light on the telegram to Paris in which, during the evening of July 30th, Paléologue reported his effort to bind Sazonov not to

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take any military measures which might serve as a pretext to Germany.

The Russian Minister told Paléologue that all mobilization against Germany was suspended, and was directed only against Austria. But he added that after his conversation with Pourtalès in the afternoon and in consequence of the correspondence which had passed between the Czar and the Kaiser, he was afraid lest Germany's intentions might be bellicose; and that moreover the Russian General Staff and Admiralty were anxious about the German preparations. "In consequence," he concluded, "the Government has decided to proceed secretly to preliminary measures of general mobilization." (19)

There is an obvious relationship between this secret Russian decision and the French recommendations; but we must none the less note that at the moment when Sazonov gave his ally this information he had already obtained from the Czar the order for general mobilization. The French ambassador learnt of the official publication of this order early in the morning of July 31st. He immediately announced the news to his Government by telegram—a telegram which took about twelve hours to reach Paris. (20)

It is thus clear that France exerted a moderating influence upon Russian policy, and that the decisions taken in St. Petersburg were due only to Russia's fear of having to face an early German attack, and to the technical requirements which this prospect involved. And in addition, it must be borne in mind that—according to the admission of the highest German authorities themselves—it was not the Russian mobilization that made the outbreak of war inevitable.

CHAPTER XI

THE ATTITUDE OF GREAT BRITAIN

WE have now considered in detail the tendencies of French and Russian (or, if it be preferred, Franco-Russian) policy; and it remains to define that of Great Britain, directed by Sir Edward Grey. This examination is all the more necessary because British policy has been much discussed by both groups of belligerents; and it has been repeatedly stated that if the British Cabinet had made its decision known sooner and declared its immediate intention of intervening in the continental conflict, war might have been averted.

To what extent the policy of the future belligerents in the month of July 1914 really depended upon the decision of Great Britain must of course be a question of interpretation of the facts—in which the personal views of commentators necessarily play a large part. But whatever may have been the uncertainties and contradictions of the policy of the Foreign Office during the preceding ten years in connection with continental questions, for the purposes of the present narrative we need only consider the actual circumstances relative to the crisis of July 1914.

As we have already seen, Sir Edward Grey did not at this period enjoy the complete freedom of action which was essential if Great Britain was to engage forthwith in an armed conflict; and the Berlin Government took this fact into account as favouring its plans. Two main considerations restrained the British Minister:

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1. Several members of the Asquith Cabinet (to which Sir Edward Grey belonged) were strongly "pacifist" in sympathy, and did not share his view regarding the rôle which Great Britain should play abroad.

2. As a result of the grave difficulties arising out of the Irish question, internal politics could not fail to embarrass the activity of the Foreign Office in the sphere of external affairs.

Nevertheless Great Britain had one ground for intervening in Europe. As a member of the Triple *Entente* group, she had come to a technical understanding with France covering the case in which a Franco-German war might involve the dispatch of a British expeditionary force to the Continent and the active participation of the British fleet in the English Channel, which would enable the French fleet to confine its operations to the Mediterranean.

It must however be clearly appreciated that this understanding between the respective General Staffs and Admiralties of Great Britain and France, with reference to a Franco-German war which might result from war between Germany and Russia, was not a regular convention which expressly bound the two parties. The correspondence exchanged between the London and Paris Governments about a year and a half before the crisis of 1914 contemplated, as I have already emphasized, only a common examination of the situation created by the imminence of a war in which either of the two countries should have reason to fear unprovoked attack by a third country. It was only after this examination that Great Britain would decide upon her line of action. If she decided to intervene then the military and naval

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understanding, which by its very nature was not politically obligatory, would automatically come into force. The British and French statesmen concerned affirmed that there existed no political convention of any kind calculated to bind the two parties, no treaty of alliance. But it does not therefore follow that the personal leanings of British Ministers—or at any rate some among them—were bound to exclude *a priori* any desire to intervene. Statements made by the highest personages prove the contrary.

Not long before (at the end of the year 1912) King George V, in reply to a question put by his cousin, Prince Henry of Prussia (William II's brother), informed him that "in certain conditions" Great Britain might range herself alongside France and Russia; and in justification of this hypothetical attitude, King George invoked the "sense of honour" which, despite the absence of any written undertaking, would not permit Great Britain to allow these two Powers to be overwhelmed.(1) Moreover, Great Britain had other grounds for action. Almost simultaneously with his Sovereign's statement Sir Edward Grey told the German ambassador that despite the absence of any secret arrangement with France, Great Britain would regard it as "an absolutely vital interest" to prevent France from being crushed.(2)

How far were the Wilhelmstrasse and the German Emperor justified in believing that Great Britain would adopt a passive attitude in case of war?

This question is the more urgent because on several occasions in the course of the month of July 1914 both veiled and official warnings were conveyed by Sir Edward Grey to the Berlin Government; and Lichnowsky, the

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German ambassador, in reporting them quite frankly expressed his own feelings about the state of public opinion in Great Britain, and gave the Wilhelmstrasse counsels of prudence—just as, for that matter, his predecessor Metternich had done before him. As we read the dispatches of the German diplomat, we find an increasing number of statements on the part of the head of the Foreign Office about the likelihood or the probability of British intervention; and we also find an increasing number of very outspoken reports from Lichnowsky on the trend of British public opinion, which in the event of military measures against Serbia would declare itself against Austria.(3)

The Wilhelmstrasse certainly distrusted the "Anglo-mania" of its ambassador. Nevertheless it was not altogether unresponsive to his information, since five days before the Austrian ultimatum to Serbia the representative of Bavaria in Berlin was able to sum up the German Government's conception of British policy(4) as follows: It is known, he said, that London "will not tolerate any dismemberment" of Serbia, and that in a general war England would range herself alongside Germany's adversaries, because she "is afraid of the decline of France to the rank of a second-class Power in the event of a fresh defeat, and the destruction of the European equilibrium," the maintenance of which she regards as essential to her interests.

On the morrow of the Austrian ultimatum to Serbia Sir Edward Grey reminded Lichnowsky that if the peace of Europe were compromised by an Austro-Russian conflict the question could not leave Great Britain indifferent any more than the other Powers;(5) a fortnight

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after the Sarajevo outrage he had already told the German ambassador that "in any case, if continental complications arise the British Government will not take sides with the aggressors." (6) And as we have already seen, the German General Staff and Admiralty definitely expected Great Britain to enter the conflict with her allies.

It must nevertheless be noted that despite her close links with Franco-Russian policy, Great Britain treated Germany with consideration, had no desire to break with her, and had even shown a readiness to come to an Anglo-German understanding—which she did not regard as incompatible with her understanding with France. The Wilhelmstrasse knew that the Foreign Office would observe a "friendly and so far as possible impartial" attitude, at least as long as it could still believe in the pacific spirit of Berlin, (7) and that Grey would even go so far as to invoke German co-operation in order to ward off the storm which threatened Europe. (8)

Great Britain did not therefore display any fundamental hostility towards Germany. Sir Edward Grey indeed adopted a friendly attitude towards her; not with any desire to conceal his intentions—since he did not hesitate to state that Great Britain might in the end be led to enter into the conflict against Germany—but simply in order to induce her to exert a moderating pressure upon Austria.

The German Government was however more impressed by Great Britain's desire for peace than by any other consideration; and this pacific disposition was also emphasized by an unofficial diplomat, Albert Ballin, director of the Hamburg-America Line and a personal friend of William II's, who had many connections in

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English society and had been asked to give the German Government the benefit of his personal impressions. He made important reservations, considering that "in the event of unprovoked aggression" Great Britain would support France as she had pledged herself to do, nor would she tolerate any invasion of Belgium.(9)

But William II, despite his Anglophobia, had another reason for relying upon the neutrality of Great Britain. This illusion was based upon what he believed to have been a promise by King George V to his brother, Prince Henry of Prussia, to whom the former had said: "We shall try all we can to keep out of this and shall remain neutral." (10) But this cannot be considered as a definite undertaking, and Prince Henry himself added that while British neutrality "at the outset" was he believed certain, it struck him as very doubtful later on by reason of Great Britain's relations with France. Nevertheless the German Emperor said that he was under no anxiety, since he had "the word of the King of England."

Eugen Fischer refers to this false calculation of William II's, based upon a "conventional declaration," in the following terms: "The truth that a man believes what he wants to believe is confirmed by these words—which were no pledge at all. . . . The Emperor attached great importance to them. . . . He obviously believed that Great Britain would hold aloof, and that all that need be done was to unmask Russia as the aggressor." (11)

But there was considerable real ground for reassurance in the fact that Germany thought she could count upon British neutrality at least on the opening of hostilities; since it would allow time for the execution of the military operations against France, whose success was regarded

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by the German General Staff as certain if they were rapidly carried out.

This confidence on the part of the German Government is therefore partly to be explained by the at all events apparent uncertainty of Sir Edward Grey's policy: an uncertainty which Hermann Lutz regards as a "grave fault." At the same time the German historian is no less condemnatory of the line of action of the Wilhelmstrasse: "to deduce from this," he writes, "that Germany is exempt from all responsibility on the ground that the World War might have been avoided if only Berlin had known at once that she would have Great Britain against her is a conclusion which, though frequently drawn, is quite false." (12) And in any case the fact remains that Bethmann-Hollweg's final overtures were due to fear of British intervention.

If we further consider British policy from the point of view of the *Entente* Powers, we find that they expected Great Britain to take up an attitude just the opposite to that desired by Germany: that is to say to announce her participation in the conflict, or at least solidarity with Russia and France. And they believed that such a definite step would cause the Central Empires to shrink from any irreparable step.

But up to the very last moment her friends of the *Entente* remained uncertain of Great Britain's intervention in their favour. If Sir Edward Grey gave Berlin grounds for anxiety, he nevertheless resisted the advice of his immediate collaborators, who held Great Britain's interests to be "tied up with those of France and Russia in this struggle." (13) He was obliged to consider British public opinion—inclined towards neutrality through

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indifference to external problems—and the neutral tendencies of some of his colleagues in the Asquith Cabinet; and he had in addition another reason for circumspect diplomacy, which was his desire to make no promise which might encourage St. Petersburg and Paris to take any dangerous decision.

The policy of the Foreign Office, dictated in principle by the internal state of the country, might therefore through its apparent friendliness towards Germany and its intimacy with France and Russia act as a brake and safeguard peace; for Sir Edward Grey's chief object was to avoid a war—the horror of which he had repeatedly foretold. But none the less if fear of the catastrophe of war dictated the prudent lines of his policy, international considerations were still bound to influence his final decision. A German victory would have as its result the establishment of German hegemony at sea, to the detriment of British naval power; any rupture with Russia would threaten to compromise British interests in Asia; and finally the occupation of Belgium by the German army would constitute a grave danger for the security of Great Britain, who could not tolerate the violation of that State's neutrality.

In short, without pronouncing arbitrarily about what Sir Edward Grey could or should have done, we may take it as certain that Great Britain was in favour of peace as the result of her internal situation and the personal inclination of her rulers. If the general tendency of her policy inclined her towards the *Entente* Powers, she maintained an impartial attitude towards Germany so long as Germany remained pacific. Her decision was dictated at the last moment by the action of the German diplomats

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and military leaders, and the policy which they adopted—inadmissible demands by Austria upon Serbia—invasion of Serbia—and the violation of Belgian neutrality—was one which, as Sir Edward Grey had plainly indicated, was bound to produce a hostile reaction in Great Britain and lead to a decision of the gravest import.

CHAPTER XII

GERMAN OPPOSITION TO THE FINAL EFFORTS TO PRESERVE PEACE

WE must now consider the character and object of the policy of the Central Empires during the progress of the events of July 29th and 30th in Russia.

Bethmann-Hollweg's Motives

The motives of the Chancellor, Bethmann-Hollweg, were now clearly apparent; and they were increasingly inspired by a double anxiety and aimed at a double objective. He did his utmost to keep Great Britain neutral and prevent her from taking up a position in favour of the two continental States of the *Entente*; and at the same time he tried to convince public opinion that the whole responsibility for the conflict which was imminent devolved upon Russia. He desired to make it appear that the Czar's Government had precipitated a general war (which had been the secret objective of the "localization" thesis); and it was consequently essential that Austria-Hungary's line of action should not in the future be open to the charge of intransigence since this would ruin the whole aim of German diplomacy, which has been summed up in the precise formula, "to put Russia in the dock."

While all its activities were turned in this direction, the Wilhelmstrasse found itself faced with a series of proposals for compromise put forward by the *Entente*.

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Berlin like Vienna brushed them all aside, and the Central Empires' refusal to consider them confirmed the fears and suspicions of the Powers.

Great Britain Asked to Promise Neutrality

Upon Great Britain the German Chancellor proposed to act by direct persuasion.

He was perfectly aware (he told Goschen, the British ambassador in Berlin) that if a European war broke out Great Britain could not let France be "crushed"; but since this was not Germany's intention, he was ready in exchange for British neutrality to give his assurance "that in the event of a victorious war Germany did not aim at any territorial acquisition at the expense of France." But when the British ambassador asked him for the same assurance in the case of the French colonies, he refused to give it; thus letting it be understood that his Government, which counted in advance upon victory, would not fail to annex part of the French overseas possessions. Later in the same conversation Bethmann-Hollweg declared himself ready to respect Dutch neutrality and territorial integrity, "so long as they are respected by Germany's adversaries."

On the subject of Belgium his statements were disturbing. "He could not tell to what operations Germany might be forced by the action of France. But he could affirm that if Belgium did not take up a position against Germany, her territorial integrity would be respected after the conclusion of hostilities." The "action of France" to which he thus referred was the alleged plan for an invasion of Belgium by French troops with the object of attacking Germany, which was the

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pretext invoked in the German ultimatum to Belgium, drafted by Moltke as early as July 26th.

Finally, the Chancellor put forward the proposal which he presented to the British ambassador as his constant personal desire: a treaty with Great Britain. "An assurance of British neutrality in the conflict to which the present crisis may give rise," he said, "would put him in a position to contemplate for the future a general neutrality agreement between the two countries." But he immediately added: "it goes without saying that it would be premature to discuss the details of such an understanding at the present moment." (1)

Sir Edward Goschen did not lead the German Chancellor to expect any favourable reply from the Foreign Office to this communication, and he was well advised. Sir Eyre Crowe, the Assistant Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, regarded the German Chancellor's offer as "an astounding proposal, discreditable to the statesman who makes it." He deduced from it that Germany actually intended to violate Belgian neutrality, and that if she was prepared to respect Dutch neutrality, it was only for the purpose of keeping the important channel of Rotterdam and the Rhine open for German imports. Moreover Crowe gathered from the German Chancellor's proposal the impression that Germany was bent upon war, and that the only consideration which had hitherto restrained her was her fear of British intervention in support of France and Belgium. This German proposal, which Sir Edward Grey's assistant regarded as "astounding," was stigmatized by Asquith, the British Prime Minister, as "infamous."

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Dispatch of the German Ultimatum to Brussels

It so happened that almost at the same moment when the German Chancellor's conversation with the British ambassador was taking place, the German ultimatum to Belgium (which had been drafted three days earlier) was dispatched under seal to the German Minister in Brussels, with orders not to make it public until he should have received further instructions.(2)

Germany was fast moving towards the general war which seemed imminent; yet Eugen Fischer claims that this communication formed a part of the normal preparations for mobilization, and had to be in Brussels before war could begin, but that its presence there did not necessarily mean the inevitable outbreak of war.(3) It may be so; but its dispatch on July 29th shows at least that Sir Eyre Crowe's comment on German intentions was no mere flight of imagination.

Hermann Lutz takes a more moderate view of Bethmann-Hollweg's attitude towards Great Britain, but his judgment does not differ in essentials from that of Sir Eyre Crowe.(4) Lutz regards the German Chancellor's declarations as a "great blunder," which "reveals perhaps better than anything else his incapacity as a statesman," and at the same time "his unshaken confidence in the possibility of maintaining British neutrality." Clumsiness, incapacity, and simple-mindedness, according to Lutz, characterized Bethmann-Hollweg's procedure.

Germany Rejects the Russian Proposal for Arbitration

Meanwhile Berlin had received the Czar's telegram (already quoted) concerning the contradiction which he had noted between "Willy's" assurances to "Nicky"

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and the declarations of Pourtalès, the German ambassador, to Sazonov. This document contained a definite proposal: the submission of the Austro-Serbian problem to the Hague Arbitration Court.

As Nicholas II had promoted the creation of the Court, this was a natural suggestion which he had indeed already made to Sazonov,(5) and as we have seen, it had also been formulated by Serbia in her reply to the Austrian ultimatum. But the Berlin Government refused to consider it, and "Willy's" only comment was to put an exclamation mark on the margin of "Nicky's" telegram, thus proving that he had not even troubled to give it serious consideration. For that matter he had already declared that to submit the dispute to arbitration seemed to him to be "madness," and that "Austria cannot permit it,"(6) and the Wilhelmstrasse's official reception of the Czar's suggestion was in entire accordance with the Emperor's opinion. Bethmann-Hollweg confined himself to informing Pourtalès that "the Hague Conference idea will, of course, be set aside."(7)

Obviously the situation required a prompt solution and could not be dealt with by a method which involved long examination; but it is also probable that an unfavourable verdict had been foreseen, and there is a hint of this in Hermann Lutz's remark that "any impartial verdict must have rejected some of the Austro-Hungarian demands (on Serbia) as incompatible with the rights of peoples."(8)

Vienna Refuses direct Austro-Russian Negotiation

Yet another peaceful solution had been sought, but in the first instance without success, in those direct

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negotiations between Vienna and St. Petersburg to which as we have seen Berchtold refused to lend himself. But Bethmann-Hollweg realized that German policy might turn such a proposal to her own advantage in the eyes of public opinion, and he had written to his ambassador in Vienna(9) that "in order to stave off a general catastrophe, or at any rate to put Russia in the wrong," the suggested negotiations were urgently desirable.

The Ballplatz's decision was thus very unwelcome to the German Chancellor, for the news of the Austrian refusal to negotiate had a bad effect in London, and Sir Edward Grey was the more unfavourably impressed because he had been informed of an important communication from the Serbian *chargé d'affaires* in Rome to the Italian Minister, San Giuliano:(10) namely that Serbia was prepared, given certain explanations, to accept even points five and six of the ultimatum—that is to "swallow" all the Austrian demands. On this occasion, Sir Edward Grey went so far as to declare that in the event of a conflict between Germany and France, his Government might be led to take up a definite position, and he added that, "by reason of Austria's obstinacy" British public opinion "was beginning to turn completely against Vienna." (11)

The German Chancellor, in his anxiety at the way in which events were moving, then made a firm and pressing suggestion to the Ballplatz. Let us admit, he said in effect, that you do not want to negotiate directly with Serbia, since there is a state of war between the two countries: it would none the less be a "great mistake" not to undertake an exchange of views with Russia. Bethmann-Hollweg felt that he was, to use his own expression, being "towed

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in the wake" of Vienna, and he instructed Tschirschky to make "energetic and serious representations" to his ally that she could not expect Germany to "let herself be dragged lightly into a general conflagration without any attention being paid to her advice." (12)

This communication took effect, for Berchtold gave Count Szápáry instructions to "open conversations" with Sazonov. At the same time he was careful clearly to define the character of these conversations, and limit their field strictly in advance; authorizing his ambassador "to consider the Serbian Note, though obviously out of date in view of the state of war which already existed between the two countries; but to entertain any suggestion which may be presented from the Russian side, and to be ready to discuss all questions directly concerned with Austro-Russian relations."

Therefore Berchtold though he was ready to open negotiations would not allow the Austro-Serbian affair to be discussed, because he did not conceive that it fell within the sphere of Austro-Russian relations; and subject to the reservations which he thus imposed upon the action of his ambassador, it was hardly likely that such conversations would lead to any appreciable result. Nor did he desire that they should, for he recommended Szápáry to leave it to Sazonov to choose the subjects to be discussed, "and even, if necessary, to enter into a discussion dealing with generalities and in no way binding." (13)

His object was simply to have the appearance of being ready to entertain conciliatory overtures.

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The Question of Serbian Sovereignty

The German last-minute efforts to modify Austrian policy encountered one essential difficulty: that of the territorial integrity and independence of Serbia. This subject arose continually in the course of Sazonov's conversations with the ambassadors of the Central Empires in St. Petersburg, and those of Sir Edward Grey with Prince Lichnowsky in London; and it was particularly delicate in that the sovereignty of the Serbian kingdom (threatened as it was by the ultimatum) would not be adequately safeguarded even if Austria-Hungary should undertake not to annex any part of her territory, and proclaim entire "territorial disinterestedness"—for to Russia the political independence of Serbia was quite as important as her territorial integrity.

German public opinion itself recognized this; as late as July 31st *Vorwärts*, the official organ of the Social Democratic Party, declared that it was "the fundamental point." Nor was this only the expression of the attitude of one particular political party, for the German Chancellor himself as strongly emphasized the responsibility of Austria-Hungary in this respect.

If Sazonov distrusted Berchtold's assurances, the reason was that he could not explain Austria's ultimatum to Serbia and above all her declaration of war otherwise than on the score of suspect designs. He was convinced that "Russia's vital interests" demanded not merely that Serbia should not be subjected to amputation of territory, but also that she should not fall through diminution of her sovereignty "to the rank of a vassal State of Austria." She must not become "a Bokhara" (like that province

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of Turkestan which, though theoretically subject to the Turks, was in fact a Russian dependency).

Sir Edward Grey agreed with Sazonov. He pointed out the danger that Serbia, while preserving her nominal sovereignty, might become in fact a vassal State even without annexation; and such a solution he considered as inadmissible by Russia, since her whole position in the Balkans might thus be affected.(14)

Sazonov desired the Powers to bring pressure upon Austria in order to induce her to abandon those of her demands which were contrary to Serbian sovereignty, but Pourtalès rejected the overtures of the Russian Minister in this direction. The two main grounds of the German ambassador's refusal were that the Russian mobilization seemed to render "any exchange of views very difficult, if not impossible"; and that "on the conclusion of peace, it would be time enough to return to the question of respect for Serbian sovereignty."

When Sazonov again suggested the idea (which he had already put forward) that it might be possible for Germany to take some action in Vienna, Pourtalès declared "that it was an extremely delicate matter to stay the hand of a Great Power which had decided to resort to arms for a just cause," and that to do so would be to run the risk of "seriously compromising" good relations with her, and might "undermine her position as a Great Power." He further affirmed that William II and his entourage had not failed to "give good advice to Vienna"; so that Russia must now attempt "to advance on to the bridge tactfully built by this declaration."(15)

The real nature of the advice given by Berlin to Vienna may be gathered from the German Chancellor's instruc-

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tions to his ambassador in Austria. The Chancellor certainly told him to make representations to Berchtold; but he refrained from bidding him speak as strongly and plainly as both his personal views and the situation appeared to demand. This was what Bethmann-Hollweg wrote to Tschirschky:(16) "The preceding remarks are intended, first of all, for Your Excellency's personal guidance. I beg you merely to draw Count Berchtold's attention to the fact that it would be well to dispel the suspicion aroused by his declarations to the Powers touching Serbia's integrity." Hermann Lutz, referring to these instructions, cannot resist the comment: "What delicacy towards the susceptibilities of an ally!"(17)

These two opposing theses were never reconciled. In response to the urgent requests of Sazonov—who distrusted assurances payable by instalments, which were not to take effect until the conclusion of peace—the German ambassador replied that there was "no chance of Austria's meeting his wishes." But at his request the Russian Minister nevertheless proposed a formula(18) which he thought capable of serving as a basis for compromise. Russia would suspend "all military preparations" if Austria would declare herself "ready to eliminate from her ultimatum the points which infringed the sovereign rights of Serbia."

In transmitting this formula to Berlin Pourtalès did not however disguise the fact that he considered what he described as Sazonov's "demands" to be "scarcely acceptable"—the same Sazonov whose "peace intentions" the German Chancellor had recognized only a few hours earlier. And Jagow also applied the adjective "unacceptable" to the Russian proposal, which ended in total failure.(19)

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Failure of the Proposal to Hold Belgrade as a Pledge

The intentions of the Central Empires were also put to the test by another proposal, which is known to historians under the name of "*Halt in Belgrad*" (standstill at Belgrade). The idea underlying it was distinct from that of respect for sovereignty; but in the course of the negotiations one idea was often explicitly or implicitly associated with the other. We shall see that this proposal also resulted in total failure, and that the Ballplatz kept the Wilhelmstrasse itself in ignorance up to the very last moment of the policy which it intended to pursue in this connection.

The idea was first suggested by William II. Immediately after having taken so favourable a view of the Serbian reply to Austria as even to declare that it eliminated any ground for war, he modified this eulogy by a suggestion.⁽²⁰⁾ The Serbian reply, he decided after all, was only "a scrap of paper." It contained nothing but "fine promises" whose execution was by no means assured, for "the Serbs are Orientals, and therefore liars, deceivers, and past-masters in the art of delay." They would never keep their word unless "*une douce violence*" were applied.

The "gentle violence" which suggested itself to the Kaiser was the occupation of Belgrade by the Austro-Hungarian army as a pledge, until the time when Vienna's demands should be effectively fulfilled. In contemplating this violent method of persuasion the Kaiser wanted to give "a visible satisfaction of honour" to the Austro-Hungarian army, which had twice already been fruitlessly mobilized against Serbia. He felt that the troops could not again be disbanded without experiencing "the sensation

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of having at least set foot on foreign soil." The occupation of the capital of Serbia was therefore in the Kaiser's eyes as much a military as a political advantage, and also "the condition *sine qua non*" of the mediation which he said he might eventually undertake in Austria in response to the wishes of the Powers.

The taking of Belgrade as a pledge was a suggestion which presented to the Wilhelmstrasse implications somewhat different from those which weighed with the Kaiser. The German Chancellor, desirous as he was to charge Russia with "the responsibility" for general war, pressed Berchtold to declare that he intended to occupy Belgrade only "temporarily," pending "the full execution" by the Serbian Government of the conditions laid down. If the Russian Government should not recognize that his attitude was justified, the Chancellor declared, "it will have against it the public opinion of the whole of Europe, which is now being alienated from Austria." (21) Thus the occupation of Belgrade, accompanied by a fresh declaration of territorial disinterestedness, seemed to Bethmann-Hollweg an excellent means of attaining his goal: the placing of Russia in a false position while at the same time ensuring an Austrian success.

None the less in order to give his ally the utmost possible satisfaction the Chancellor recommended his ambassador, in transmitting his advice to the Ballplatz, to "be careful to avoid creating any impression that we desire to restrain Austria." The object of Berlin, if European war could not be avoided, was "to improve as much as possible" (for the alliance) "the conditions in which it will have to be waged."

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The character and intention of this advice was perfectly understood in Vienna, and the proof is to be found in the report made to the Ballplatz immediately after the visit of the German ambassador, Tschirschky,(22) of which the text is as follows: "The Chancellor of the German Empire is of opinion that such an attitude towards Russia would, if the need arises, be an efficacious means of casting on to Russia alone the odious responsibility for a world war—a responsibility which otherwise might rest upon ourselves. In suggesting to us this approach to the St. Petersburg Cabinet the Chancellor of the Empire begs us not to be mistaken about the meaning of his advice, which is in no way to be interpreted as implying any desire to exercise any pressure upon us or hamper our freedom of action. His sole aim is to improve the conditions in which we might be forced to carry on a world war, and to diffuse sympathy for our cause. It is especially in relation to public opinion in Great Britain that it is important to set on record, by a conciliatory attitude towards Russia, that in case our war against Serbia should spread to the Great Powers, no blame would attach to us but only to Russia." It was thus solely and simply a question of having appearances on one's side, without any real sacrifice; and creating what Hermann Lutz calls "a morally favourable platform for war."(23)

Berchtold, thus urged, declared himself ready to repeat his assertion that he did not intend to undertake any annexation in Serbia; but he left his reply on the subject of the taking of a pledge in suspense.(24) As will be seen later, he was not to give it until July 30th.

This incident struck Eugen Fischer forcibly; and he expresses surprise at Germany's apparently pacific

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advice being accompanied by an assurance that she had no desire to hamper Vienna's strong action against Serbia. "The advice and the reservation," he adds with some humour, "are as reasonable as if it were suggested to a dancer that his legs should be tied together, but at the same time he should go on dancing." In Fischer's opinion, the occupation of Belgrade in the circumstances in which it was contemplated would not have "left much of the independence of the Serbian kingdom." (25)

The German historian's reflections find confirmation in Berchtold's embarrassed conversation with the Italian ambassador, in the course of which he refused to give any explicit undertaking, "because it is naturally impossible to foresee whether, against our will and in consequence of the course of operations, we may not find ourselves obliged to maintain our occupation of Serbian territory." (26)

The uncompromising position taken up by the Austro-Hungarian Minister, who wanted to postpone the question of the evacuation of Serbian territory until after the conclusion of peace and the progressive execution of his conditions, nullified all efforts at conciliation. Eugen Fischer again observes that "the pledge could not be taken without war, and once at war Austria might change her attitude. If the Russians wanted to be sure of preventing the enslavement of Serbia to Austria-Hungary they could not accept this proposal." (27)

During the night of July 29th-30th and the day of July 30th, Bethmann-Hollweg made a great effort to modify the intransigence of the Ballplatz. Great Britain's attitude was making him more and more anxious, he had received a telegram from Lichnowsky (28) advising

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him that Grey was insistent upon mediation by the Powers, which might have as its basis, "after the occupation of Belgrade or other towns," such conditions as Austria should suggest. "The necessity for mediation seemed to him urgent, if matters were not to come to a European catastrophe." The German ambassador added that the British Foreign Secretary had told him, by way of a friendly personal hint, that in the event of war between Germany and France, Great Britain could not "long remain aloof." Much alarmed by this communication, the German Chancellor expressed his profound anxiety to the German ambassador in Vienna in instructions of the utmost urgency.(29)

"Germany," he said, "if she had Great Britain as her adversary, would have to bear the brunt of the struggle. Austria's political prestige, the honour of her army, and also her justifiable claims with regard to Serbia could undoubtedly be sufficiently assured by the occupation of Belgrade or other places; the humiliation of Serbia would re-establish Austria's position in the Balkans and *vis-à-vis* Russia. In view of these circumstances we should urgently and strongly advise the Vienna Cabinet to accept mediation in such honourable conditions. Responsibility for the consequences which may otherwise follow will be very heavy for Austria and for ourselves."

Scarcely five minutes after this telegram had been dispatched to Tschirschky, Bethmann-Hollweg sent him another(30) which has already been referred to, in which using categorical and almost stern language, he said:

"We are ready to fulfil the obligations of our alliance. But we must refuse to allow ourselves lightly to be dragged by Vienna into a general conflagration without

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our advice being heeded." The German Chancellor was now using to weaken Austrian resistance the very same argument which had at the beginning of July served him as a pretext for urging Vienna to undertake a warlike initiative. In this complex state of affairs Bethmann-Hollweg's frame of mind is none the less clear. He wanted to inspire the British Government with confidence, and believed that he could thus avoid its intervention, but in order to do so he needed Berchtold's co-operation and good will.

The news from London had aroused no less emotion in the Kaiser's mind than in his Chancellor's, and it was betrayed in the usual language of the notes which he wrote in the margin of ambassadors' dispatches.(31) Grey was a "vile impostor," a "despicable fraud." What he said was "vile and mephistophelian, but very English," and the British were a "lot of dirty shopkeepers." Great Britain, the Kaiser declared finally—in a sentence which is also important for the spontaneous confession it contains—"alone bears the responsibility for war or peace, it is no longer ours."

Despite his wrath the Kaiser nevertheless agreed at his Chancellor's request to make a personal approach to Francis Joseph.(32) He drew the Austrian Emperor's attention to the proposal that the taking of Belgrade as a pledge should be followed by a statement of the Austrian conditions, and requested him to "communicate his decision as soon as possible." But as to the nature of this decision the German Emperor gave no advice.

The Kaiser's real intention was revealed by Bethmann-Hollweg; it was a question of not "provoking the irrefutable suspicion that we want war."(33) But Germany

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desired not only to turn suspicion aside from herself, it was essential also to implicate Russia. The attitude of Vienna did not however make this result at all easy to obtain, and the German Chancellor feared that the Austro-German initiative was only too apparent.

The situation was in fact as follows: If mediatory negotiations were eventually to be set on foot, in the first place the assent of the two parties to a suspension of hostilities was obviously required;(34) and Sir Edward Grey himself promised to use his influence in this direction in St. Petersburg and in Paris.(35) But the offer served only to confirm Bethmann-Hollweg in his fear lest Vienna's refusal to compromise should "no longer" enable "the blame for the European conflagration to be thrown upon Russia," and he added, further emphasizing this idea, that: "If Great Britain succeeds in her efforts, while Vienna rejects every offer, she will prove that she positively wants war, into which we shall be dragged, while Russia will remain guiltless of any blame."(36)

The hope that Vienna would yield was vain: the main condition which dominated these exchanges of views among the chancelleries, and which was regarded as essential by Russia—who undertook not to engage in any "act of aggression against Austria," if Austria did not provoke one,(37)—was precisely that which Austria flatly rejected. Berchtold refused to make any concession whatever; and he further demanded that in view of the partial mobilization of the Russian forces, the two continental *Entente* Governments should be warned by the third, the British Government, that if this mobilization were not suspended it would provoke Austrian and German mobilization. He absolutely declined to yield

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upon the essential axiom of policy: Russia's complete submission without any concession whatever on the part of Austria.

To sum up, one of the parties demanded the suspension of operations against Serbia in exchange for a suspension of mobilization; the other demanded that Russia should simply cancel her partial mobilization without any compensation. "Obviously," declared the Austro-Hungarian Minister, "the Imperial and Royal Government cannot allow its military operations against Serbia to be interfered with in any way." (38)

It might naturally be asked whether the solution of this politico-military problem was to be found in the consent which Berlin recommended Vienna to give; but this question does not in fact arise. During the evening of July 30th there occurred a sudden change of front in the attitude of the Chancellor of the German Empire. He telegraphed to Tschirschky not to execute the urgent instructions which he had just given him with a view to putting pressure on Austria; and thus the Chancellor cancelled his own overtures—which had indeed as yet led to no result. (39)

So the path of diplomacy was closed, and Austria-Hungary was left free to choose the path to war. Berchtold, who had already advanced far in this direction, was now to make final his refusal to turn back by rejecting the British proposal for a standstill at Belgrade.

CHAPTER XIII

GENERAL MOBILIZATION OF AUSTRIA

THE path of immediate war was precisely that into which the German military authorities had been shepherding Austria for the past few days, even before Austria made known her reply to the proposal for taking Belgrade as a pledge; and their intervention explains Bethmann-Hollweg's retreat from the position which he had first taken up.

Moltke's Arguments

As early as July 28th—the date of the Austrian declaration of war on Serbia—Moltke had set forth his point of view in a memorandum which reached the German Chancellor on July 29th;(1) in which he defined the political as well as the military considerations which led him to consider a preventive war as the only possible solution of the Balkan question, both in itself and in its relation to Europe as a whole.

During the closing days of July Moltke felt that things were moving too slowly. He was convinced that the success of the German plan depended upon the utmost rapidity in execution, and that valuable time was being lost. For the purpose of hastening the march of events, and precipitating a war which he believed inevitable, the Russian partial mobilization seemed to him a sufficient ground. Germany's duty was to support her ally against Russia and also against France, Russia's ally, and thus to "accept a struggle on two fronts." He therefore

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felt that it was imperative that Austria should take the initiative, lest her dangerous neighbours should have time to mobilize and Germany's situation thus become daily more gravely threatened. From the military point of view "it is," Moltke declared, "of the utmost importance to be quite sure, at the earliest possible moment, whether Russia and France have made up their minds to go to the length of war with Germany."

But Moltke had other arguments also to support his thesis. He was convinced of Germany's military superiority over France, in artillery, in musketry, and in the training of her troops; and he was no less convinced of the inadequate preparedness of the Russian army. Moreover he thought that a time of year when harvests were gathered and recruit-drill completed was a particularly propitious one.⁽²⁾ And finally he was influenced by Conrad's pressing requests. The Austrian Chief of Staff demanded that Berlin should warn Russia that her mobilization against Austria was equivalent to a threat to which Germany herself was bound to reply by "the most extensive military counter-measures."⁽³⁾ In short, he was pressing Germany to mobilize at once.

This suggestion was not calculated to displease the German military leaders. In their conversations with the Kaiser at the New Palace in Potsdam, on July 29th, they proposed the immediate proclamation in Germany of "the state of threatening danger of war," which at this moment would have been justified simply by Russia's partial mobilization against Austria.

But the Chancellor's opposition led to the postponement of this decision. He did not feel convinced that the Russian mobilization necessarily meant war, and therefore

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the *casus foederis* (the case contemplated in the treaty of alliance) was lacking; and he thought it wiser to "await events," lest he should find "neither German public opinion nor British public opinion" on his side.(4)

On the next day, July 30th, a Cabinet Council was held under the presidency of Bethmann-Hollweg.(5) The Chancellor set forth the situation and the steps which he had taken; and maintained the view that it was better not to rush things, but to await Vienna's reply to the proposal for a temporary occupation of Belgrade. It was only after the receipt of Vienna's reply that military measures were taken—namely the declaration of a state of threatening danger of war, which "meant mobilization; and mobilization in our situation—mobilization on both sides—must lead to war."

The Chancellor pointed out that a favourable reply from the Ballplatz would have had the valuable advantage of "putting Russia in the wrong," a point to which the Chancellor attached "the utmost importance." Nothing could therefore be done in the military sphere before the Austrian decision was known; for upon it peace or war depended. Once that decision was taken—and it could not be long delayed—"another path might be followed." This latter reflection of Bethmann-Hollweg's proves that the German Chancellor scarcely believed Austria inclined to favour any peaceful solution. In fact, the disagreement between him and the German General Staff merely concerned the advisability of proclaiming the state of danger of war at once. The Chancellor felt that for the sake of winning over public opinion it was worth while putting off the final decision until the last possible moment; but Moltke firmly maintained his own

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point of view, which was contrary to that of Bethmann-Hollweg. Without further reference to the discussion in which he had taken part the day before, almost at the moment when the Prussian Ministers reassembled, he took the initiative of sending to Conrad, through Bienert, the Austrian military *attaché* in Berlin, a communication of the utmost importance. He informed Conrad that in his opinion, "if the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy did not mobilize at once against Russia," he considered "the situation highly critical." It was necessary that the Monarchy should announce officially that its counter-measures were the result of the Russian mobilization order, for "thereby the *casus foederis* for Germany would be provided." Moltke further advised the Monarchy to "reject any new proposal made by Great Britain with a view to maintaining peace. For the security of Austria-Hungary, to hold out to the end in a European war is the sole remaining means of salvation." And he added that Germany placed herself "unreservedly" beside her ally. Nor was he content with this indirect communication; he himself also telegraphed to Conrad in terms whose brevity did not compromise their clarity. "Resist the Russian mobilization. Austria should stand fast and mobilize at once against Russia. Germany will mobilize."(6)

In his commentary on the procedure of the German Chief of Staff, Hermann Lutz emphasizes as an established historical fact that Moltke gave this categorical advice to his Austrian colleague before he had any certain information about the Russian general mobilization. The German historian quotes the passage of the memorandum in which Moltke declared that the general mobilization of the armies of Austria would render "a clash

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between her and Russia inevitable," and that in consequence it would be Germany's duty to mobilize, which would lead to "mobilization in the other Russian military areas." Hermann Lutz proceeds as follows:

"Moltke's pressure therefore, and the influence of his personal point of view (which, however, as we shall see, did not correspond with Conrad's, and was not in accordance with the Franco-Russian military convention), would have led to a European war even without the Russian order for general mobilization on the afternoon of July 30th." Lutz regards this conclusion as "irrefutable." (7)

The Austrian Decisions (July 30th)

We must now follow the course of events on the Austrian side.

Conrad was profoundly averse from the idea of the taking of a pledge; the question of the occupation of Belgrade had already been discussed between him and Berchtold in 1913, and also that of simply inflicting a punishment on Serbia—a "punitive expedition," as it was commonly called. He felt that such pressure might be effective against negroes, but not against a well-armed European State; (8) and it was in this frame of mind that he attended a conference with the Emperor Francis Joseph, Berchtold, and Krobatin, the Minister for War, on the evening of July 30th. The following decisions were taken: the military operations against Serbia were to be continued; a courteous reply to the British proposal to be dispatched, but no real consideration to be given to it; and on August 1st an order for general mobilization to be issued, fixing August 4th as

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the first day of mobilization. This latter point was however subject to reconsideration the next day.(9)

Instead of the advice in favour of delay which he received from Bethmann-Hollweg, Berchtold finally yielded to Moltke's urgent representations; and on July 31st at 7.45 in the morning, when he learnt of the contradictory telegrams from Berlin, he could not refrain from expressing his surprise to his Ministerial colleagues. "Who is governing Germany," he asked, "Bethmann or Moltke?" As Eugen Fischer points out, it was Bethmann-Hollweg who held nominal power; but on this occasion the Austrian Ministers acted as though Moltke's was the decision which counted.(10)

In the end, Berchtold expressed his satisfaction to Conrad. "I sent for you," he said, "because I was under the impression that Germany was drawing back; but I have now received from the competent military authorities the most reassuring declaration." And the conclusion of their interview was a decision to ask the Austrian Emperor to issue the order for general mobilization which had been decided on in principle the day before.(11)

Immediately afterwards, Tschirschky telephoned to Berlin that Austria had ordered general mobilization as a reply to the Russian mobilization.(12) Berchtold, for his part, conveyed to the Austrian ambassador in Berlin a copy of the telegram to Moltke in which Conrad had informed him of the "supreme decision" on mobilization, and requested the ambassador to communicate it to the Chancellor, Bethmann-Hollweg.(13)

These events took place early in the morning of July 31st, and the Moltke plan was thus carried into

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effect. Austria's definite decision was taken without consideration of Russian general mobilization, which was still unknown; and Austria's mobilization—ascribed to the mobilization against her of part of her adversary's forces—was bound *ipso facto* to lead to the mobilization of the German army.

A Cabinet Council was held under the presidency of Berchtold at which his opinion prevailed: namely that a temporary occupation of Belgrade, even with the consent of Russia, would be merely a satisfaction of prestige, “a throwing dust in people's eyes”; and that it would permit Russia “to pose as the saviour of Serbia, and especially the Serbian army,” which if it emerged “intact” from the present conflict would in two or three years be in a position to attack the Dual Monarchy “in conditions much more disadvantageous” for Austria.

“Further demands” to be made on Serbia were also considered; and the Council on Tisza's proposal unanimously decided to declare that the Vienna Government would be disposed “to examine more closely the British proposal for the taking of a pledge, but only on condition that the operations against Serbia were continued and that the Russian mobilization were cancelled.”(14)

In fact the Austrian general mobilization was decided upon simply in order to lead, in accordance with Moltke's undertaking, to German general mobilization. Just as Austria-Hungary had declared war on Serbia in order to satisfy the insistence of the Wilhelmstrasse, so it was in order to satisfy the desires of the German General Staff that she ordered the mobilization of all her forces, though they could not come into action until thirteen days later.

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The Pretext of Russian General Mobilization

Since these irrevocable decisions had been taken because of Russian mobilization against Austria alone, the whole of the German Chancellor's plan was upset.

How was he now to make the world believe that the catastrophe which was falling upon Europe had only one cause, or at least one capital cause, beside which all past actions—the Potsdam conversations, the Austrian ultimatum to Serbia, the declaration of war on Serbia, the successive refusals of peace proposals, the diplomatic intrigues to break the opposing front—paled into insignificance? The one unquestionable pretext (or which must be made to appear as unquestionable) was the Czar's proclamation ordering the mobilization of all his forces. It was this step to which the German Chancellor must be able to point as a mortal sin, by contrast with which the series of bellicose steps on the part of the Central Empires could be regarded as merely venial sins without decisive consequences; and throughout the day of July 31st Bethmann-Hollweg never lost sight of this consideration.

The news of the Russian general mobilization was received in Berlin by telegram from Pourtalès, the German ambassador, at 11.40 a.m. It must be noted that the Austrian mobilization, with which German mobilization was closely and expressly linked, had been decided upon during the evening of July 30th and ordered early in the morning of July 31st. The Russian mobilization had been decided upon during the afternoon of July 30th, was known in Russia at dawn on July 31st, and announced to Berlin late that morning. On both sides the influence

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of the military leaders had carried the day; but those of Austria-Hungary and Germany resorted to arms without knowledge of the decision simultaneously taken by Russia. Pourtalès's telegram reached the Wilhelmstrasse after Berchtold's refusal (finally approved by Berlin) of any negotiation on the basis of the taking of a pledge together with the suspension of military operations. It arrived after Austria's decision (which Germany had suggested) to create a *casus foederis* by mobilization: a decision which must inevitably lead to the German army's immediate participation in the conflict in support of her ally against the Russian danger.

Portalès's telegram came in the nick of time, and enabled the Berlin Government to redress the balance of the situation, which since the previous day had developed very much to its detriment: it proclaimed "the state of threatening danger of war," which was to be followed by mobilization within the next forty-eight hours, leading "inevitably to war"; and it made this proclamation as a counter-measure in reply to the Russian step.(15)

The telegram in which the German Chancellor conveyed the news to London contained the following clause: "in spite of the mediation in progress, which apparently offers prospects of success." (16) What Bethmann-Hollweg here referred to as "the mediation in progress" were the offers which he had himself officially rejected; and the apparent "prospects of success" were Austria's refusal to break off her action against Serbia and her intention to increase the demands contained in her ultimatum to that country.

To sum up, the sequence of events can hardly justify a judgment that the Russian mobilization was the final

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event which precipitated the European war, by causing the mobilization of Germany. Although the Russian mobilization preceded the Austrian it had no influence upon the course of events, since it was unknown to those who took the Austrian and German decisions. The link of cause and effect was lacking, and even if it had existed, on Moltke's own confession the Russian mobilization was not (as we have seen) a sufficient ground for deciding Germany to mobilize.

Bethmann-Hollweg's Exploitation of the Russian Decision

But the German Chancellor—determined if possible to save appearances—resumed the diplomatic game which Berchtold's intractability had all but ruined. He tried to convince British public opinion by using the Russian mobilization as a pretext, and imposed upon his ambassador in London the "task" of trying to convince Sir Edward Grey that in the presence of the "provocation" of this mobilization and the "vital danger" which it constituted for Germany, despite the personal assurances given by the Czar to the Kaiser it was essential for Germany to reply "by strong measures." (17)

CHAPTER XIV

THE RUSSIAN MOBILIZATION AND GERMAN SOCIAL DEMOCRACY

BETHMANN-HOLLWEG desired not only to convince British public opinion, but also his own countrymen of Germany's right to defend herself against the Russian aggression, and in particular (as Eugen Fischer has noted),(1) he endeavoured to gain the adherence of the masses from whom the powerful Social Democratic Party was recruited: in which undertaking he was wholly successful.

At the very end of July and during the earliest days of the month of August a change of front took place in the attitude of the German Socialists. For several years Social Democracy had maintained that the duty of an anti-militarist party hostile to standing armies was to oppose war, which would array against one another those who ought naturally to be brothers, the proletarians of all countries; and day by day during the crisis it denounced the bellicose policy of the Ballplatz and the Wilhelmstrasse. Then, all at once, Social Democracy rallied to the Government. On August 4th its representatives in the Reichstag voted war credits, just like the members of the "capitalist and imperialist" bourgeois parties. In order to explain this historical phenomenon, it is necessary to follow the course of events in detail.

The German Socialists' Opposition to War

Ever since July 21st, *Vorwärts* (the official organ of the party) its executive committee, and its delegates to the

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International were all conspicuous in protesting vehemently against Austro-German policy; and at every phase in the progress of events the attitude of the party was frankly stated.(2)

Vorwärts first protested against the idea of holding the whole Serbian people responsible in advance for one particular outrage. "Because the blood of Francis Ferdinand and his wife has been shed by a misguided fanatic," it declared with indignant astonishment, "must the blood of thousands of workers and peasants also flow? Must the crime of a madman be aggravated by a crime still more insane?" When the Austrian ultimatum became known *Vorwärts* denounced the will to war which its demands concealed, and emphasized the exceptional gravity of the claim—"utterly contrary to the law of nations"—to entrust Austrian officials with a legal inquiry in Serbia; declaring that "any State which agreed to the authorities of another Government operating in its territory for the suppression of any subversive movement whatsoever, would be submitting to the destruction of its independence and could no longer be considered as a country of which account need be taken." To put Serbia under the humiliating obligation of renouncing her rights as a sovereign State, with the alternative of seeing Russian intervention in her favour precipitate a world war, was to present her with alternatives so frightful, so inhuman, that it offended not merely all proletarian Socialists but also all men who were animated by the spirit of modern civilization. *Vorwärts* declared further that it knew of no right by which Serbia could be forced to oppose "the free expression of Pan-Slav sentiments," and considered that such pressure amounted to no less than condemning her

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to play "the part of executioner of Serbian hope for the future."

It refused to admit that Germany had any right to give her adherence to the "infinitely reckless and criminal," the "unscrupulous" policy, the "policy of despair" of the Austrian masters, and so allow herself be dragged into complications at the heels of her ally. It criticized "the game, no less dangerous than Vienna's," played by Berlin, and even levelled an accusation in advance: "German Social Democracy holds the German Government co-responsible for all the future proceedings of Austria"—an Austria who had entered "upon a path of the wildest provocation."

The thesis of "localization" of the conflict struck *Vorwärts* as "a summons of Austria to war rather than a warning to her to give the preference to peace." The paper even went so far as to defend Russia. "The worst danger of war at this moment is not Czarism, but Austria, acting upon bad advice."

When it learnt of the German rejection of the British proposal to suspend hostilities, *Vorwärts* regarded this as "the most frightful responsibility" for Germany; and applauded Great Britain for saying that "at the point where we stand, the decision depends on William II." It proclaimed as a fact dominating the whole situation "the intimate friendship between Russia and Serbia": a friendship of such a kind that "it is absolutely impossible for Czarist Russia entirely to abandon her *protégé*." Though on July 31st it condemned the Russia decision in favour of general mobilization, on the next day it affirmed that this was nevertheless "no ground for refusing to continue the most serious and patient nego-

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tiations, inspired by a sincere policy of peace. Germany has no reason to become nervous over the Russian mobilization since these operations, in consequence of the organization of the Russian army and the size of her territory, are very much slower than our own."

We see therefore that as late as August 1st, *Vorwärts* was in agreement with Moltke and Falkenhayn about the secondary importance of the Russian mobilization as a cause of war; and even after the German mobilization on August 2nd it was felt that there was still room for negotiation, and that so long as war had not been declared the maintenance of peace was not impossible.

In a special issue of July 25th *Vorwärts* published an appeal on behalf of the workers' party in favour of peace. The executive committee of the party protested strongly against "the reckless provocation to war by the Austro-Hungarian Government," whose demands, it declared, "are the most brutal ever presented to any Sovereign State, and can only be directly calculated to provoke war." It called upon the German Government to act in favour of peace, and if a "shameful war" could not be avoided, to take no part in the conflict. "Not one drop of any German soldier's blood ought to be sacrificed to the mad ambition of the leaders of Austria or the sordid calculations of Imperialism." The manifesto ended as follows: "We do not want war. Down with war! Long live the international brotherhood of peoples!"(3)

A campaign of public meetings under the auspices of the party was organized immediately after the rupture of diplomatic relations between Austria and Serbia. *Vorwärts* of July 27th gave a list of twenty-seven meetings

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to be held in Berlin and its suburbs; and a great demonstration, which led to a conflict with counter-demonstrators, was held in *Unter den Linden* on July 28th.

This campaign for peace received solemn confirmation on July 29th in Brussels, where in accordance with the resolution passed in 1910 at Copenhagen to meet the case of international conflicts, the committee of the Socialist International had assembled. In presence of the threat of world war it was decided to multiply demonstrations in favour of peace and the settlement of the Austro-Serbian conflict by arbitration; to intensify proletarian action in the countries concerned; and to convene an urgent Congress in Paris for August 9th, a Congress intended to give "strong expression to the pacific will of the world proletariat."

In the evening of July 29th a great public meeting took place under the presidency of the Belgian, Emile Vandervelde. Hugo Haase, president of the executive committee of the German Social Democratic Party, made a speech in the course of which he levelled a severe accusation against the Imperial Governments; and condemned "the crime of the declaration of war," describing the Austrian ultimatum as "a conscious and deliberate provocation to war," and praising the moderation of the Serbian reply, which ought to assure peace if Austria were acting "in good faith." And he finally stigmatized the proposal to occupy Belgrade, "in order to teach the Serbs a lesson," as only to be compared with the action, at once ridiculous and odious, of "a teacher punishing a pupil."

He concluded by saying that the secret treaties did not bind the German proletariat, which felt that "Germany

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ought not to intervene, even in the case of Russian intervention.”(4)

Social Democracy's Change of Front

If these were the feelings and ideas of the German Socialists during the last week of July, how came it that, early in August, they gave their approval to the Government “co-responsible” for the Austrian decisions?

To answer this question we must bear in mind Bethmann-Hollweg's anxiety to “put Russia in the dock.” He had himself announced that a refusal by the Ballplatz of the last proposal for mediation, to be accompanied by a suspension of hostilities, would prove irrefutably that the Central Empires had let loose the war; therefore after Berchtold's refusal it was essential to avoid any untoward effect upon German opinion as a result of this demonstration. He therefore decided to make overtures to the leaders of the Social Democratic Party. The details of these overtures are not yet fully known, but their object was clear; and we see the charge of Russian aggression—the spectre of the Russian danger—taking shape in them.

The Germans of all parties had always lived in fear of a Cossack invasion advancing upon Berlin. The General Staff had been able to turn this feeling to account, and had kept up the idea that a threat of aggression hovered over Prussia's eastern frontier. In the eyes of the German Socialists this national danger was coupled with a political danger: Czarist Russia, despotic Russia, barbarous Russia stood opposed to Germany, the land of liberty and culture, the perfect type of modern State. Russia was also the country of the bloody repression

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of the working masses at the time of the revolution of 1905; she was, "practically and culturally," the enemy of Socialism. When the veteran Bebel declared patriotically in the Reichstag: "White-haired though I am, I would shoulder a rifle if Germany were the victim of foreign aggression,"(5) it was Russia of whom he was thinking; and from 1905 onwards he foresaw a clash in the east with Germany's "real and only dangerous enemy," against whom, he said, "we should always be on our guard and keep our powder dry." In any war between Germany and Russia, he declared, the German Socialists would march "as one man."(6) It was because of the possibility that aggression, coming "above all from the east," might engender a "world war" that Bebel in 1913 extolled the voting of the taxes required by the Government in consequence of the law increasing the army.

It remained to convince Social Democracy that this war, which it had virulently denounced as a war of aggression and conquest, was in reality a defensive war against the threat of despotic Russia, "imposed" on Germany by Cossack Russia: and the task had to be carried through at the last minute.

The Government's first overture was made on July 26th, that is to say on the morrow of the Socialist party's manifesto already quoted. Hugo Haase had a conversation at the Prussian Ministry of the Interior in connection with the projected working-class demonstrations against war. The representative of the Government who had requested this interview expressed the opinion that in case Russia should intervene against Austria as the sequel to a declaration of war by Austria on Serbia, the obligations of the alliance would compel Berlin to support

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Vienna. Haase protested that any Austrian aggression could not have this consequence, since the alliance was "purely defensive." "It was already clear to him," Haase's son and biographer, "that the Government proposed to exploit the state of mind of the working class who were hostile to Russian Czarism and Cossacks in order to arouse warlike enthusiasm"; and the biographer adds that this in fact was the "orientation of policy which later led many workers into error." (7)

On July 29th Bethmann-Hollweg himself took the initiative in securing an interview with the Reichstag member Südekum, who belonged to the Right Revisionist wing of the Socialist party. It was the day of Austria's declaration of war on Serbia, and a day of the meeting of the committee of the Second International in Brussels; which, to quote Scheidegger, "took up a strong position against the threaters and adjured the workers of all countries to make protestations." It was the day when Haase, in the name of the German proletariat, made his indignant protest against the Austro-German policy.

The German Chancellor in this interview with Südekum outlined the political situation and "formulated his opinion on the subject of the party's attitude, and in particular the attitude of its Press"; and the result of this interview enables us to form some idea of the nature of his intentions. Südekum transmitted the Chancellor's "observations" to the headquarters of the party's executive committee. On the very same day he informed Bethmann-Hollweg "that no strike action of any kind is contemplated" and that the committee, "conscious of its responsibility, undertook to avoid in the Press the use of any ph

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which might be exploited "by the war parties in the various countries."

Then, in terms which although vague and embarrassed, were doubtless intelligible enough to his correspondent, Südekum gave him the assurance "that Your Excellency's overture with a view to occasional direct communication at critical moments is welcomed with appreciation, and fully and sympathetically understood"; thus expressing the gratitude of the Socialists, who were flattered at being called upon to participate in the responsibility of government. The writer of the narrative, who relies on documents in the archives of the Imperial Chancellery, further notes that Social Democracy thus began to work in collaboration with the State, whereas it had hitherto been kept at a distance.(8)

Bethmann-Hollweg announced the successful result of his negotiations with the Socialists at the Cabinet Council held on July 30th, when nothing was yet known of the Russian general mobilization. He was able to tell his colleagues that(9) after his talk with Südekum he was sure that nothing in particular was to be feared from Social Democracy and the Socialist party, and that "there would be no question of a general or partial strike, or of any sabotage."*

* The next day, at eight o'clock in the evening, the Ministry of War informed the High Command of its confidence, founded "on trustworthy authority," that "the Social Democratic Party firmly intends to adopt a satisfactory attitude." There were also negotiations between the Minister of the Interior and the executive committee of the trade unions; and these led to "the surprising assurance" that the Government had no intention of creating the least difficulty for the trade unions, provided that they created no difficulties for the Government.(10)

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Was Russian aggression the argument invoked by the German Chancellor to convince Südekum? The record of their interview does not enable us to answer this question, but in the same connection it is interesting to refer to the article written the next day (July 30th) by Stampfer, who until quite recently had been the editor of a daily "correspondence" for the Socialist newspapers. Scheidemann draws attention to this and reproduces it in his *Memoirs* as "an important party document," which plainly indicates the state of mind of Social Democracy.

The author of this article exclaims: "We do not want to see our wives and our daughters the victims of Cossack outrage. . . . Our hearts have no enthusiasm for war, they are deeply shocked at such a prospect, but if that is the only sacrifice we can make to stay the hand of Fate; if moreover we recall the nameless infamies which Czarism has perpetrated against its own fellow-countrymen; and finally, if we envisage the possibility of the myrmidons of this barbarous Power trampling our soil as intoxicated conquerors, then but one cry rises to our lips: 'No, anything but that!'"(11)

The Socialists were no more prepared than any other Germans to underestimate this terrible danger, or to accept a defeat "which would mean collapse, annihilation, and indescribable general misery." Public opinion in Germany had now made up its mind that the responsibility for aggression devolved on Russia; and Social Democracy must also take up arms against her.

There was still however some hesitancy upon the question of voting war credits, so entirely opposed to the traditional policy of the party. Stampfer had let it be clearly understood that the Socialist parliamentary group

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would not attempt to avoid the duty of defending the Fatherland; but the German Socialists still desired to be informed of the intentions of French Socialists in order to establish unity of international action; and with this object Hermann Müller went to Paris, and was received at the Palais Bourbon on August 1st, the day after the assassination of Jaurès. Müller declared that he had come to inform himself of the intentions of his French comrades, with a view to the adoption of "a similar line of action on both sides," and stated that the German Socialists would either vote against the war credits or abstain from voting altogether. The French Socialists pointed out the necessity—the duty—of assuring the defence of a country which was the victim of aggression; but Müller declared that the distinction between aggressive war and defensive war was "out of date," since the present conflict was the result of "capitalist Imperialism." The French Socialists however and in particular Renaudel, arguing from the pacific policy of their own Government, replied that they could neither vote against war credits nor abstain from voting; but finally, in a spirit of international solidarity, they suggested an understanding for abstention on both sides. No undertaking was given however, and each of the two countries remained free to decide for itself "in full autonomy." (12)

In these circumstances the German Socialist party found itself faced with the demand for war credits, on which the Reichstag had to decide in public session on August 4th.

German Social Democracy desired to wash its hands of all responsibility and, as Hermann Müller had done in Paris, throw the responsibility on the capitalist regime.

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Vorwärts and the executive committee of the Socialist party (which at the same time published a manifesto on July 31st recommending prudence, in view of the proclamation of a state of siege) repudiated all responsibility for the outbreak of war.(13) But capitalism was not the only culprit; there was also aggressive Czarism, and it was upon the latter that Bethmann-Hollweg laid the strongest emphasis in a memorandum which he circulated to the members of the Reichstag on August 4th. In this memorandum the German Chancellor declared that war was the result of Russia's deliberate interference in the Austro-Serbian dispute and the military measures which she had taken, whereas it was her duty to await events; he represented Russia as having taken the initiative by the invasion of German territory, and concluded: "It is therefore Russia who has started the war against us." In the *White Book* concerning the negotiations between Germany and Russia, the German Chancellor published the telegrams exchanged between the Kaiser and the Czar; but carefully omitted the one in which Nicholas II proposed to submit the Austro-Serbian dispute to the Hague Arbitration Court.

On August 4th the Socialist parliamentary group voted the war credits unanimously; but it was a unanimity which had not been arrived at without a struggle, for at a preliminary meeting the day before fourteen votes were cast against the motion, among them that of Hugo Haase, the chairman of the Reichstag group. But this was a tiny minority by comparison with the seventy-eight votes in favour of supporting the credits, and even this fraction of the group attended the public session of the Reichstag with the intention of following the lead

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of the majority. What influenced the minority was their desire to safeguard the unity of the party, and the same motive induced Hugo Haase to yield to the strong representations of his own partisans, and in his capacity as chairman, himself read the party declaration justifying a vote of which he did not himself approve.(14)

This declaration announced to the world that the war, which German Social Democracy "in close accord with its French brethren" had opposed "with all its strength," was the consequence of the imperialist policy of the Governments; it invoked the argument of defensive war and the threat of the "horrors of hostile invasion," especially the threat to the eastern frontier which exposed Germany's inheritance to the danger of Russian barbarism and reaction. "For our people and our future liberty the victory of Russian despotism, stained with the blood of the best elements among its own people, would mean the loss of much, if not everything. It is a question of warding off this danger, and safeguarding the *kultur* and the independence of our own country."(15)

Thus relying upon the fact that it could not be held responsible for a capitalist crime, German Social Democracy fulfilled the duty (which in justice we must remember it had persistently proclaimed for years past) of defending the German Fatherland from what it was told was aggression by tyrannous, Cossack-ridden Russia. Nothing now remained of its first violent criticism of the mad policy of the Imperial Governments, or of its protests against Austria's abuse of force towards Serbia and her provocation of Russia.

The German Socialists voted the war credits on August 4th, even after hearing Chancellor Bethmann-

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Hollweg admit the injustice of German aggression upon neutral Belgium. And contrary to their custom, which was to exchange their votes for some concession by the Government to the working classes, they also voted these credits without (as Kautsky wished) laying down any preliminary condition. "The voting of the war credits," a German historian writes, "was not regarded as a commercial transaction." (16)

Vorwärts illustrated the significance of the Reichstag session by a pictorial comment. In its issue of August 4th it published a map of the German-Russian frontier, with arrows indicating the direction of Posen and the way in which an advance of the Russian army would threaten Prussia. It also published in its first supplement of August 6th a map of the western frontier which bore no such indications. Russia's responsibility and the Russian peril were now the thesis of the Socialist Press throughout the German Empire; it was Nicholas II who had "willed this hellish conflagration," and he was the aggressor. "We must employ all our force to keep Czarism out of the country." Similar quotations might be multiplied indefinitely. (17)

Haase declared in the Reichstag on August 4th that not only her national independence, but even Germany's very existence was at stake. It was a question of "to be or not to be," and the same formula served as a heading for Stampfer's article. It is to be noted that Bebel also used the same phraseology as early as 1913, when he said that in the "world war" which might result from Russian aggression, "our Fatherland may find itself faced with the question, to be or not to be."

The Socialist Konrad Haenisch was therefore quite

German Social Democracy

right in explaining his party's change of front by "the fact that to the German people as a whole, Russia seemed the aggressor and the main enemy." (18) Bethmann-Hollweg had achieved what he wanted; he had found a happier solution than the one which his Sovereign contemplated on July 29th, when he proposed to "lock up the agitators and *tutti quanti*" on account of "the anti-militarist demonstrations in the streets." (19) But it was to the Socialists, now rallied to the cause of national defence, that William II referred a few days later when he pronounced the famous words: "I no longer recognize parties: I recognize only Germans."

CHAPTER XV

GERMANY'S ULTIMATUM AND DECLARATION OF WAR

FROM July 30th onwards the Kaiser and his Chancellor were more than ever in the hands of Moltke, who was henceforth to rush things.

The Challenge Addressed to Russia

Immediately after the German proclamation of the state of threatening danger of war, the German Chief of Staff seized upon the news of the Russian general mobilization as a pretext. He took no account of its necessary slowness; and fearing, rightly or wrongly, lest the Russians should gain an advantage, he caused Russia to be summoned to suspend her preparations within twelve hours.(1)

The Demand for French Neutrality

But the military programme to be carried into effect embraced an immediate offensive against France. Moltke therefore could not wait until France decided spontaneously to support Russia when she had been attacked; Germany must take the initiative in a rupture with France.

This was the meaning of the communication with which the German ambassador in Paris was charged; he was instructed to notify the Quai d'Orsay "with the utmost speed" of the news of the German ultimatum to Russia, and to inquire, as a matter of extreme urgency,

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whether France would remain neutral in a German-Russian war.(2)

The German Chancellor himself admitted that he had no illusions about the inevitable failure of such a communication; but he nevertheless thought it a good policy to provide even for impossibilities, so that in case the French Government should after all say "Yes," Herr von Schoen was to "demand the handing over of the fortresses of Toul and Verdun as a pledge of its neutrality," to be occupied by the German army and handed back to France at the end of Germany's war with Russia. The French reply to this demand was to be given by four o'clock in the afternoon of August 1st at latest.

Herr von Schoen condemned this communication as "the grossest of blunders," and due to a "complete misunderstanding of (French) national sentiment."(3) But the Wilhelmstrasse and the German General Staff were perfectly aware of France's pacific intentions; and in making such a demand they intended to compel her to enter the war: nor for that matter did Herr von Schoen require to address his communication to the French Minister for Foreign Affairs, for faced with this proposal for French neutrality, Viviani simply replied that "France will act as her interests dictate."(4)

Since the German General Staff was in command, declarations of war were now to follow one another swiftly; and they were all of Berlin's own initiation.

The Declaration of War on Russia (August 1st)

On August 1st at about seven o'clock in the evening Pourtalès called upon Sazonov, who informed him that Russia must refuse to suspend mobilization; the German

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ambassador then placed in his hands the declaration of a state of war between Germany and Russia. This declaration alleged that by proceeding to general mobilization without awaiting the result of the Kaiser's mediation the Czar had created for Germany "a grave and imminent danger"; and that by his refusal to suspend military operations he had shown that his action was directed against Germany. In consequence, the Kaiser "takes up the challenge and considers himself in a state of war with her (Russia)." (5)

General Mobilization in France (August 1st)

In the case of France the execution of the instructions given to Herr von Schoen was more complex: Germany, still anxious about British public opinion, would have preferred not to open hostilities and to take the chance that France herself would attack first. But the French Government was no less anxious not to alienate Great Britain and also to avoid any frontier incident which might engender war; and in the measures which were taken on July 30th it was accordingly laid down that the covering troops—that is to say those closest to the frontier—should remain ten kilometres in rear of the line of demarcation between French and German territory, apart from a few strategic points where they were to remain four or five kilometres in rear. The consequence of this provision was that enemy patrols might advance a considerable distance before encountering any hostile troops. It required all the insistence of General Joffre, the French Commander-in-Chief, after the German proclamation of a state of danger of threatening war, to persuade the French Government to order general

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mobilization (August 1st)—which decision was again accompanied by renewed recommendations to the troops in the field to avoid any patrolling or reconnaissance—in short, any breach of the frontier line.(6)

Violation of the French Frontier by the German Troops
During this period of expectancy several frontier incidents occurred. German patrols advanced into French territory at more than one point, and one of these incursions was carried so far that, despite the fact that the French troops were ten kilometres in rear of the frontier, it reached the village of Joncherey in the neighbourhood of Delle; there was an engagement with the soldiers occupying a French post, and a corporal was killed.

The French Government at once protested, and cancelled the instructions which had been given to the Commander-in-Chief. Nevertheless it did not declare war.(7)

Germany Declares War on France

The German General Staff was however in haste to terminate these preliminaries. Accordingly on August 3rd, late in the afternoon, von Schoen presented himself at the Quai d'Orsay and handed to Viviani a Note in which a state of war between his country and France was declared, on account of "acts of marked hostility committed over German territory by French aviators." One of these acts, which he definitely mentioned, was bomb-dropping on the railway near Karlsruhe and Nuremberg. This incident, known as that of the Nuremberg aeroplanes, was purely imaginary; it was based on a communication made the day before by the General

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commanding the Third Bavarian Army Corps,(8) but at the moment when the German ambassador was drawing attention to it in Paris, a telegram had already been received in Berlin from the Prussian Minister in Munich in which he denied the allegation.

"All that was observed," he said, "were unknown aeroplanes, which did not look like military aeroplanes. No bomb-dropping is established, and still less of course the French nationality of the aviators."(9)

Germany's Refusal to Bind Herself to Respect the Neutrality of Belgium

Such were the circumstances in which a state of war was proclaimed. But in order to advance into France the German army had to carry out the first part of the General Staff's plan, and pass through the neutral territory of Luxembourg and Belgium; for the Belgians must not be given time to organize the defence of the forts of Liège and the Meuse.

The Brussels Government, like the other Powers, was conscious of the threat hanging over the kingdom. As early as July 28th—the day of the Austrian declaration of war on Serbia—it had decreed that the army should be put upon a "reinforced peace footing," and upon July 31st–August 1st it had ordered general mobilization. The anxiety which this measure denoted was, as we know, justified by the ultimatum to Belgium which Moltke had drafted as early as July 26th; and it was further justified by subsequent events.

On August 1st Great Britain had obtained from France a formal undertaking to respect the neutrality of Belgium;(10) but she could not secure a similar promise

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from Germany. The German Minister in Brussels confined himself to the statement that he was "personally" convinced that his country had no threatening intention towards Belgium.(11) This personal opinion was contradicted by events. On the same day Prussian troops removed railway lines in Luxembourg territory, and the Grand Duchy was invaded on August 2nd; though it is true that Bethmann-Hollweg declared that this did not involve any act of hostility towards Luxembourg, but was simply a measure of protection against French attack on the railways, stating as a fact that "French forces are on the march towards Luxembourg."(12)

Meanwhile the German army was concentrated at Aix-la-Chapelle, where its commander, General von Emmich, took up his quarters at the Union Hotel; ready to begin his advance as soon as he received the Belgian reply to the German ultimatum.(13)

Delivery of the Ultimatum to Belgium

The Note which was in readiness in Brussels(14) was handed to the Belgian Government late in the afternoon of August 2nd. The complaint which it made was the alleged French intention to "cross Belgian territory in order to attack Germany." And in the proclamation later issued by General von Emmich when he advanced into Belgian territory at the head of the army of the Meuse, he similarly declared that the invasion was due to "unavoidable necessity," since French officers "in disguise" had crossed Belgium in motor-cars "in order to penetrate into Germany."(15)

The German Note informed Belgium that if she maintained "a benevolent neutrality" she would recover

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all her territory and her independence on the conclusion of peace; if she took up "a friendly attitude," all German requisitions would be paid for and any damage done would be made good; but if the invading army met with resistance from the forts on the Meuse, or if the destruction of railways, roads, tunnels, or other means of communication were attempted, then Belgium would be treated as an enemy: and a time-limit of twelve hours was set for her to choose between benevolent neutrality, a friendly attitude, or hostility.

Belgium Rejects the Ultimatum (August 3rd)

On August 3rd, at seven o'clock in the morning, the Belgian Government notified its decision to the German Minister in Brussels. It refused to sacrifice "the honour of the nation" or betray "its duties towards Europe," and declared itself ready to resist "by all the means in its power." It was the reply which the German Minister had expected, for he had announced in advance that "according to his impression" it would be in the negative.(16)

The Invasion of Belgium

The last diplomatic formality was accomplished on the morning of August 4th. The Belgian Government was informed that on account of its rejection of the "benevolent proposals" of Germany, she would proceed to take, even "by force of arms," the "measures of security . . . which were essential in view of the French threat";(17) and invasion began immediately afterwards.

Bethmann-Hollweg at once attempted to justify this action to the British Government, and again cited Russia as responsible. Germany, he said, had to safe-

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guard her own existence: in order to meet "a military situation" which has been forced upon her resulting from "the unhappy Russian mobilization," she was obliged "to adopt all means to save her skin." This was not an "intentional violation of the law of nations, but the act of a man fighting for his life." (18) He developed the same thesis in the Reichstag on August 4th when he said that the invasion of Belgium had been imposed on Germany by a vital necessity which overrode any question of right or wrong; and declared that "Necessity knows no law."

Great Britain Enters the Conflict

The German violation of Belgian neutrality definitely decided the attitude of Great Britain. During the previous days the Cabinet in London had taken up a more clearly defined position, but it still shrank from the decision which France and Russia demanded—a decision rendered inescapable by the danger which the crushing of France would present to England. The news of the German troops' advance into Luxembourg and then into Belgium did away with the Government's last hesitation, and Great Britain ranged herself alongside her two friends.

Italy and Rumania Remain Neutral

Contrary to the action of the *Entente* Powers, all three of whom entered the war, there was no such complete solidarity on the part of the allies of Germany and Austria. Italy and Rumania deserted them (an action which was in itself a disavowal of Austro-German policy), and proclaimed their decision to remain neutral. Both countries invoked the same reason for this attitude.

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According to the terms of alliance they were not bound to participate in any but a defensive, unsought war; and they felt that this was a war of aggression on the part of Germany and Austria, so that no *casus foederis* existed.

William II himself, in one of those marginal notes in which he was in the habit of bluntly expressing his impressions, drew the obvious conclusion from the Italian and Rumanian decisions. "Our allies," he wrote bitterly, "are falling away from us like rotten apples. This means a complete collapse of German as well as Austro-Hungarian diplomacy. It should and could have been avoided."(19)

CHAPTER XVI

GENERAL SUMMARY

Now that this narrative of events is concluded, in which I have endeavoured to set forth only the relationship of cause and effect; it remains only to decide what conclusions may legitimately be drawn; and—since personal judgments are disputable—simply to summarize the facts which emerge from the evidence adduced.

I

Despite the state of tension between the group of the Triple Alliance and the Triple *Entente*, and whatever may have been the ambitions or aspirations, the grievances or anxieties of nations and Governments, it was not inevitable that a general war should break out in the summer of 1914.

But William II and the German General Staff, although they had maintained a pacific attitude during the recent Balkans wars (from which Belgrade had emerged with considerable territorial acquisitions) were fully aware of the unpreparedness of France, Russia, and England; they believed that the moment for aggression had come, and determined to seize the first favourable opportunity to adopt a policy of force. And Vienna, encouraged by Berlin, was inclined towards an attack on Serbia at the risk of provoking the European complications which might follow upon Russia's resistance to any disturbance of the Balkan *status quo* as defined by the treaty of Bucharest.

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II

In order to bring about "the great decision" which she regarded as essential, Austria-Hungary proposed to take advantage of the "opportunity" presented by the assassination of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand at Sarajevo on June 28, 1914—in which event she saw a good pretext for calling the Serbian Government itself to account. Berchtold made a statement to this effect immediately after the outrage, about a fortnight before the Austrian investigation had even begun: an investigation which for that matter ended by recognizing the innocence of the Serbian Government. His first desire was to "settle accounts" with the hated Serbia, even though a general war should be the consequence of this local initiative.

III

Before transforming his fixed intention into a decision, Berchtold sought the advice and invoked the concurrence of the German Government; upon which the development of events thus came to depend. Berlin was at this time free to advise either peace or war; and without hesitation she assured Vienna of absolute and unconditional support, even if a European war should break out. Further, Berlin insisted upon the necessity of Austria-Hungary's taking immediate advantage of exceptionally favourable circumstances: namely, the insufficient preparedness of the *Entente* for war, and its desire for peace. From this moment onwards the Wilhelmstrasse never ceased to incite the Ballplatz to irrevocable action.

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IV

Fortified by this definite undertaking and pressing encouragement on the part of Germany, Austria-Hungary sent an ultimatum to Serbia nearly four weeks after the Sarajevo outrage, containing conditions deliberately framed so as to be incompatible with the independence of a sovereign State, and therefore unacceptable.

V

The Wilhelmstrasse affirmed in several official declarations that it was unaware of the contents of the Austrian Note to Serbia. In fact the Wilhelmstrasse was familiar with the essential conditions twelve days before its publication, and with the actual text twenty-three hours beforehand; it had raised no objection to any of the terms, but on the contrary had expressly made known its approval to the other Powers even before the final text had been made public.

VI

In order to make any negotiation impossible, Germany and Austria rejected the proposal made by the *Entente* Powers who, with the object of finding a formula for compromise between Belgrade and Vienna, had asked for an extension of the very short time-limit granted Serbia for her reply.

VII

Although the Serbian reply to the Austrian ultimatum was most conciliatory, it contained reservations which offered matter for discussion. Yet Austria-Hungary,

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having decided in advance to demand complete and absolute submission, immediately carried out her plan of a rupture of diplomatic relations.

VIII

While keeping in close touch with Austria the German Government, under cover of a thesis of localization of the conflict (the object of which was to make Russia impotent to act against Austrian aggression), set aside on its own account and without even consulting Vienna a British proposal for a conference of ambassadors of the States not directly interested in the conflict.

The German Government further refused to associate itself with a British proposal for negotiation between Austria and Russia on the basis of the Serbian reply, officially advising Vienna not even to take this proposal into consideration; and for that matter Berchtold spontaneously opposed to Sazonov's suggestion a pure and simple refusal to enter into such discussions.

IX

As early as the morrow of the Serbian reply to Austria and two days before Austria and Serbia were actually at war Moltke, the Chief of the German General Staff, drafted an ultimatum to Belgium; a small nation whose neutrality Germany had solemnly guaranteed, and which had no sort of connection with the Austro-Serbian quarrel.

X

Although the military authorities had made it known that the Austrian army could not be ready for action

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before August 12th, Vienna nevertheless declared war on Serbia as early as July 28th. Vienna took this decision at the instance of Berlin, by whom she had been strongly urged to end the *Entente's* attempts at conciliatory intervention by a *fait accompli*. On the next day Belgrade, the capital of Serbia (abandoned by the Serbian Government, which had withdrawn into the interior of the country), was bombarded.

XI

As a sequel to Austria's declaration of war on Serbia Russia decided to mobilize part of her army against Austria. The Russian military authorities considered this partial mobilization dangerous, because it dislocated the plan for general mobilization, which had been drafted solely on the basis of mobilization against both Austria and Germany combined; and they regarded as certain Germany's entrance into the war alongside Austria. After hesitating and changing his mind, the Czar ended by giving the order for general mobilization. This decision was due not only to the technical arguments of the military High Command, but also to a communication from the German ambassador, who required the St. Petersburg Government to cancel its military preparations if it desired to avoid German participation in the conflict. And apart from the fact that this intimation was contrary to the assurance earlier given by the Wilhelmstrasse to the effect that it had no objection to Russia's partial mobilization, it was presented in such a manner as to give Sazonov the impression that it was intended as a threat.

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XII

In the conversations which had taken place a few days earlier in St. Petersburg between Poincaré (the French President), Viviani (the Premier), Nicholas II and Sazonov, it is impossible to find any proof that the French statesmen urged the Russians to declare war.

XIII

While the Russian military measures were being discussed and decided upon Austro-German diplomacy by point-blank refusals and delaying and sidetracking manoeuvres, wrecked all the efforts of the *Entente* to prevent an extension of the conflict: the Czar's offer to have recourse to arbitration by the Hague Court; the proposal for direct negotiation between Austria and Russia; the proposal that Austria should declare her intention to respect Serbia's independence; and the proposal for Austria's temporary occupation of Belgrade by way of a pledge, together with suspension of hostilities on the part of Austria and cessation of the Russian mobilization.

XIV

It is true that on July 30th Bethmann-Hollweg, the German Chancellor, on being informed by his ambassador in London that the consistently negative and manifestly aggressive policy of the Central Empires was causing the British Government grave anxiety, brought the strongest pressure to bear on Berchtold in order to obtain some concession from him which would allay Sir Edward Grey's suspicions. But no sooner had he sent instructions

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in this sense to his ambassador in Vienna than he cancelled them, and thus himself put an end to diplomatic action.

XV

It was also on July 30th that Moltke got into touch with his Austrian colleague Conrad on his own account, and pressed him to secure an order for Austria's general mobilization in reply to Russia's partial mobilization, since this would give Germany a pretext for proceeding to her own mobilization. And while on the one hand Austria decided to make an evasive reply to the British proposal for the taking of a pledge, and in any case not to suspend the military operations which she had begun against Serbia (upon whom moreover she now proposed to make further demands), on the other hand her own mobilization, which must inevitably lead to German mobilization also, was decided upon.

XVI

Bethmann-Hollweg's renunciation of any moderating influence upon Austria, and the decisions taken at Vienna at the instance of the German General Staff, certainly coincided with the issue of the Czar's order for the mobilization of all his forces on July 30th; but as this Russian decision was not yet known either in Berlin or in Vienna it could not have exercised any influence upon the progress of events. What took place in St. Petersburg was in no way the determining cause of what took place on the same day in Berlin and Vienna.

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XVII

In any case, the German declaration of a state of war between Russia and Germany could not be explained by the fact of Russian mobilization, for her mobilization was of a different character from that of the other Powers—a fact clearly stated by the highest responsible military authority, Moltke himself. Moreover Nicholas II solemnly promised William II that his army when mobilized would avoid any provocation; but he was unable to obtain a reciprocal undertaking to the same effect from the Kaiser.

XVIII

The arrival in Berlin of the news of the Russian mobilization enabled William II to proclaim the “state of threatening danger of war” for which the German military commanders had been clamouring for the past two days, as a reply to the Czar’s decision; so that Bethmann-Hollweg could represent the German action to Great Britain as a response to “provocation.”

XIX

Henceforth Moltke, responsible for carrying out a plan which had been definitely drawn up twelve years earlier, was the master of the situation. Politico-military steps on Germany’s part succeeded one another rapidly: a summons to Russia to cease mobilization; a proposal to France to remain neutral in a German-Russian conflict, and if—contrary to all probability—she accepted this proposal, a demand for the handing over of the fortresses of Toul and Verdun to the German army as

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a pledge; a declaration of war on Russia, represented as the reply to a "challenge"; a declaration of war on France on a false pretext; a refusal to give an undertaking to respect Belgian neutrality; a declaration of war on Belgium on a false pretext; and the invasion of Belgium, of which the immediate effect was the intervention of Great Britain.

XX

Italy and Rumania, the allies of Germany and Austria, refused to join with them in an armed conflict which they regarded as a war of aggression.

XXI

The Austro-German determination to improve Austria-Hungary's position in the East and to foil the *Entente's* alleged plot against Germany's security explains the fact that the world war was the conclusion of the crisis of July 1914.

From the vast documentation at the disposal of historians two other facts emerge:

1. No indication is to be found that, but for the steps concerted between the Vienna and Berlin Governments, and but for Berlin's encouragement or incitement of Vienna, this war would have broken out on the initiative of either Serbia, Russia, France, or Great Britain.

2. The pacific frame of mind of these Powers never ceased to be recognized by their adversaries right up to the end of the month of July: in other words, after the Central Empires themselves had, as Bethmann-Hollweg put it, "thrown the iron dice."⁽¹⁾

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As stated in the Preface, the reader will find below chapter and page references to the authorities noted in the text.

The notes are preceded by a list of the principal works which any student of the subject must consult. These works are of two kinds:

- (a) Original documents, almost all published officially.
- (b) Historical works.

In addition, there is a considerable propaganda literature, which expresses German criticism of the drift of Article 231 of the Treaty of Versailles, as accusing the Imperial Government of the guilt of letting loose war in 1914. This propaganda in Germany has at least a semi-official character, and the essential part of its argument is to be found in Alfred von Wegerer's book, *Die Widerlegung der Versailler Kriegsschuldthese (A Refutation of the Versailles War Guilt Thesis)*, which appeared in Berlin in 1928, and has been translated into both English (1930) and French (1933).

There are also many other sources, notably the testimony of statesmen and ambassadors, which may be recommended to those students who desire to inform themselves more fully. Information regarding these different categories of works may be found in:

1. The bibliography (in German) in *Die Kriegsschuldfrage (The Question of War Responsibility)*, by Georg Schwab, published in 1925.

2. The German review long entitled *Die Kriegsschuldfrage*, organ of the *Zentralstelle für Erforschung der Kriegsursachen* (Central Office for the Investigation of War Causes), which now appears under the more vague denomination *Berliner Monatshefte* (Berlin Monthly Magazine), its former sub-title.

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* Capital letters or names following details of titles indicate the abbreviations under which the works are quoted in the notes.

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Lutz (Hermann), *Die europäische Politik in der Julikrise 1914* (*European Policy in the Crisis of July 1914*). This work, which appeared in 1930, forms the first volume of the publications of the first sub-commission, entitled *Die Vorgeschichte des Weltkrieges* (*The Prehistory of the World War*). It constitutes in itself the first series in the general publications of the Commission, whose general title is *Das Werk des Untersuchungsausschusses der Verfassungsgebenden Deutschen Nationalversammlung und des Deutschen Reichstages 1919-30. Verhandlungen, Gutachten, Urkunden*. *Lutz*.

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Renouvin (Pierre), keeper at the Bibliothèque-Musée de la Guerre, professor at the Sorbonne, *Les Origines immédiates de la guerre. 28 juin-4 août 1914* (*The Immediate Origins of the War*). This work has been published in two French editions (1925 and 1927) and an English edition (1927). It is a development and adaptation of a course of public lectures delivered at the Faculty of Letters of the University of Paris. *Renouvin*.

GREAT BRITAIN

Wilson (H. W.), *The War Guilt*. 1928.

UNITED STATES

Fay (Sidney B.), professor at Harvard University, *The Origins of the World War*. 1928. *Sidney Fay*.

Schmitt (Bernadotte E.), professor at Chicago University, *The Coming of the War*. 1930. *Bernadotte Schmitt*.

NOTES

CHAPTER I

1. Griesinger to the Chancellor, July 6, 1914. *K.*, I, No. 19 A.
2. Bunsen, British ambassador in Vienna, to Grey, June 29, 1914. *B. D.*, No. 21. "Those who remember the circumstances of the notorious Agram and Dr. Friedjung trials in 1908 and 1909, will hesitate to accept without adequate proof wholesale denunciations of the Serb patriotic Societies which may now be expected to be made."
3. Private letter from Tschirschky to Jagow, August 25, 1913. *Gr. Pol.*, vol. xxxv, No. 13737, p. 362, note 2.
4. *Conrad*, vol. iii, pp. 311, 406, 506, 754 *et seq.* "As the goal of any Balkan policy of the Monarchy I contemplate the incorporation of Serbia in the Monarchy, because in the development of an independent Serb State I see the greatest danger for the future of the Monarchy."—"The annexation of Serbia is, therefore, in fact not only of the highest value for the Monarchy, but even an express condition of its existence."—"Serbia, the aggressive, inexorable enemy of the Monarchy."
5. *Sidney Fay*, vol. ii, p. 224.
6. Report by Gabriel Bertrand, French Consul at Sarajevo, December 8, 1912. *Doc. dipl. fr.*, third series, vol. v, No. 21.
7. *Conrad*, vol. iii, p. 758.
8. *Conrad*, vol. iii, p. 611.
9. Telegram from Szécsen, June 23, 1914. *Oe. U. A.*, vol. viii, No. 9906.
10. Conversation with House, June 1, 1914. *The Intimate Papers of Colonel House*, edited by Ch. Seymour, vol. i, p. 261.
11. *Conrad*, vol. iii, pp. 469-70. William II also told Conrad (in November) that Austria's value as an ally would diminish if she had not the strength of mind to undertake a bold action. *Ibid.*, p. 486.
12. Report by Berchtold, October 26, 1913. *Oe. U. A.*, vol. vii, No. 8934.
13. Report by Jules Cambon, November 22, 1913. *Yellow Book*, No. 6. With this conversation in 1913 we may compare what William II said in 1904 to Leopold II, King Albert I's predecessor. It was summed up by Leopold himself in a note to

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his Minister for Foreign Affairs, as follows: " 'For years past,' said William II, 'I have done everything to make friends with France, but, whenever I have held out my hand to her, she has repulsed my advances with contempt. All my proposals encounter the systematic opposition of the French Government and are combated by the French Press, which distorts them and uses them as a pretext for insulting me. I should have liked, in the general interest, to form with France a Continental *bloc* strong enough to act as a brake on the ambitions of Great Britain, who wants to confiscate the whole world to her own advantage. On the contrary, however, I find France preaching hatred and revenge, and preparing for war with the object of annihilating us. Now I've had enough of it. I am not going to be so imprudent as to wait until the preparations which are being made against us are complete. If the French want war—well, they shall have it.

" 'So far as your country is concerned, I recommend you to prepare yourself, too. Your army is too small, and its strength is not in proportion to your population. If the unpopularity of military service prevents you from increasing it, why should you not recruit black troops in your colonial possessions? At small expense you can find an unlimited number of soldiers there. In this terrible struggle which lies ahead of us, Germany is certain of victory; but this time you will have to choose. You will have to be either with us or against us. If you are with us, I will give you back the Flemish provinces of which France robbed you, contrary to all right. I will reconstitute the Duchy of Burgundy for you. Think over what I offer you and what may await you.' " *Libre Belgique*, May 31, 1933; reproduced in *Revue Belge des Livres, Documents et Archives de la Guerre*, 1914-18, ninth series, p. 108. This conversation in 1904 is also briefly reported in Chancellor Bülow's *Denkwürdigkeiten (Memoirs)*, vol. ii, p. 72.

14. Jaekh (Ernst), *Kiderlen-Wächter, Der Staatsmann und Mensch (Kiderlen-Wächter: the Statesman and the Man)*, vol. ii, p. 236.

15. Von der Lancken-Wakenitz, *Meine dreissig Dienstjahre (My Thirty Service Years)*, p. 57.

16. Bülow to the Wilhelmstrasse, July 30, 1905. *Gr. Pol.*, vol. xix, No. 6229.

17. Ludendorff, "Denkschrift vom December 1912" (Memorandum of December 1912), in *Urkunden der Obersten Heeresleitung*

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über ihre Tätigkeit 1916-18 (*Documents of the German General Staff on the rôle which it played from 1916 to 1918*), p. 54.

18. Conrad, vol. iii, pp. 670 and 673.

19. Von Eckardstein, *Die Isolierung Deutschlands* (*The Isolation of Germany*), Leipzig, 1921, pp. 177-87.

20. Bernhardt's work, first published in October 1911, had run into six editions by February 1913. Colonel (retired) Frobenius's work, entitled *Des Deutschen Reiches Schicksalsstunde*, a treatise first published in March 1914, ran into twelve editions within a few months. It was immediately translated into English and circulated in the United States under the title, *Germany's Hour of Destiny*.

21. This is, notably, the opinion of *Sidney Fay*, who expresses himself as follows, vol. ii, p. 53: "The immediate occasion of the World War was the murder of the Austrian Archduke at Sarajevo. Had it not occurred, there would have been neither an Austro-Serbian War, nor a World War, in the summer of 1914. In spite of the increasing tension between the Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente, it is probable that European diplomacy would have succeeded for months, perhaps for years, in averting a conflict which all statesmen foresaw as unspeakably terrible, and for which the Franco-Russian forces planned to be better prepared in 1917 than in 1914. The murder of the Archduke ignited material which would not otherwise have taken fire as it did, and perhaps not at all."

CHAPTER II

1. See the texts quoted by *Bernadotte Schmitt*, vol. i, pp. 244 *et seq.*

2. Griesinger to the Chancellor, June 30, 1914. *K.*, I, No. 10.

3. General Potiorek to the Minister for War, June 29. *Oe. U. A.*, vol. viii, No. 9948.

4. Reports by von Storck, June 30 and July 1. *Oe. U. A.*, vol. viii, Nos. 9951 and 9964.

5. Report by Tisza to the Emperor Francis Joseph, July 1. *Oe. U. A.*, vol. viii, No. 9978.

6. Berchtold to von Storck, July 5. *Oe. U. A.*, vol. viii, No. 10055.

7. Telegram from von Wiesner, July 13. *D. A.*, first part, No. 17.

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8. Mousset, *Un drame historique; l'attentat de Sarajevo*, p. 30, note 1.

9. Mousset, pp. 16 and 320.

10. This was the expression employed by the Russian Minister at Cetinje on July 6, when he communicated to his Government information given him by "a well-informed Serb." *Int. Bez.*, No. 105.

11. Telegram to the Chancellor, July 6, *K.*, I, No. 19a.

12. Report by Sazonov to the Czar, January 7, 1914. *Livre Noir*, vol. ii, p. 374.

CHAPTER III

1. *Conrad*, vol. iv, p. 36.

2. Report by Tisza to the Emperor Francis Joseph, July 1, 1914. *D. A.*, first part, No. 2.

3. *Conrad*, vol. iv, p. 37.

4. *D. A.*, first part, No. 1 (Annex).

5. *D. A.*, first part, No. 1.

6. Marginal annotations by William II on Tschirschky's telegram, June 30, 1914. *K.*, I, No. 7.

7. Note by Count Alexander Hoyos on an interview with the German publicist Victor Naumann, July 1, 1914.—Report on a conversation with Ganz, correspondent of the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, July 4. *Oe. U. A.*, vol. viii, Nos. 9966 and 10038.

8. Szögyény to Berchtold, July 5. *D. A.*, first part, No. 6.

9. An excellent analysis of these conversations has been made by *Renouvin*, pp. 47 *et seq.*, from the documents of the Reichstag Commission of inquiry.

10. Letter to Jagow, July 17. *K.*, I, No. 74.—Letter to the Reichstag Commission of inquiry, October 25, 1919. *Renouvin*, p. xvii.

11. Szögyény to Berchtold, July 6. *D. A.*, first part, No. 7.

12. On this subject, see the testimonies quoted by *Bernadotte Schmitt*, vol. i, p. 334.

13. Hoyos's letter was published in French translation by Maurice Muret in the *Journal des Débats*, November 12, 1931. It contains an interesting piece of information: Hoyos speaks in it of "a message from the German Emperor to Berchtold, expressly declaring to him that the Kaiser hoped we should not hold back any longer, but proceed to action with all possible energy." The above is a quotation from Count Hoyos's book,

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Der Deutsch-englische Gegensatz und sein Einfluss auf die Balkanpolitik Oesterreich-Ungarns (*The German-English rivalry and its Influence upon Austro-Hungarian Balkan Politics*) (Berlin, 1922), p. 80.

14. Lutz, p. 36.

15. Fischer, p. 167.

CHAPTER IV

1. Minutes of the session. *D. A.*, first part, No. 8. Berchtold expressed himself as follows: "In the first place, they would have to make up their minds whether the moment had not come to put Serbia, by vigorous action, once and for all beyond any possibility of doing any harm. Such a decisive blow could not be dealt without diplomatic preparation. Accordingly, he had already sounded the German Government. The conversations in Berlin had led to a very satisfactory result; for the Emperor William, as well as Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg, had formally promised us that, in case of war with Serbia, we should have Germany's support, unconditionally. . . . In his eyes, it was clear that an armed conflict with Serbia might have war with Russia as its consequence."

2. Hoyos, it appeared, had declared in Berlin that Austria should dismember Serbia. On July 17, Jagow informed Tschirschky that, according to Berchtold and Tisza, this was merely a "personal opinion" of Hoyos's. Jagow requested Tschirschky to beg Vienna to make known, "to some extent," its real intentions. *K.*, I, No. 61.

3. In the course of the discussion, the Austrian Prime Minister, Stürgkh, said: "What ought to exercise the greatest influence upon our decision is that, in the quarter which we should regard as the surest support of our policy in the Triple Alliance, we have been promised, as we have just heard, unreserved faithfulness, and that, from the same quarter, we are recommended to take action at once."

4. *Conrad*, vol. iii, p. 465.

5. Memorandum by Tisza, July 8. *D. A.*, first part, No. 12.

6. Berchtold to Tisza, July 8. *D. A.*, first part, No. 10.

7. Tisza's visit and statement were the subject of a "very secret" telegram from the German ambassador in Vienna, July 14. *K.*, I, No. 49. See also a second telegram from him, *ibid.*, No. 50.

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8. *Conrad*, vol. iv, p. 36.
9. So he expressed himself in his autograph letter to William II. *D. A.*, first part, No. 1.
10. Letter from William II to Francis Joseph, July 14. *K.*, I, No. 26.—About the Austrian Emperor's state of mind, see also the telegram from the German ambassador relating a conversation between Berchtold and his Sovereign, July 10. *Ibid.*, No. 29.
11. Telegram from departmental head Forgach to Count Szécsen, July 10. *Oe. U. A.*, vol. viii, No. 10182.
12. Telegram to Rome, July 12. *Oe. U. A.*, vol. viii, No. 10221.
13. Private letter from Jagow to Lichnowsky, July 18. *K.*, I, No. 72.
14. Report by the Bavarian *chargé d'affaires* in Berlin, July 18. *K.*, IV, annex iv, No. 2.

CHAPTER V

1. Szögyény to Berchtold, July 9th. *D. A.*, first part, No. 13. "The Secretary of State (Jagow) is, as I have been able to satisfy myself, entirely in agreement with the decision taken by the Government which I have reported to you, and he has assured me that in his opinion the action projected against Serbia should be begun without delay."
2. Tschirschky to Jagow, July 13. *K.*, I, No. 40.
3. Tschirschky to Bethmann-Hollweg, July 14. *K.*, I, No. 49.
4. Szögyény to Berchtold, July 16. *D. A.*, first part, No. 23.
5. Minutes of the session, July 19. *D. A.*, first part, No. 26. "In Count Berchtold's opinion, it was not likely that our step would become known before the (French) President's departure from St. Petersburg; but even if that were the case he could not see that it would be any great disadvantage, since we should have satisfied the laws of courtesy by awaiting the end of his visit. On the other hand, for diplomatic reasons, he (Berchtold) must declare himself against any further delay, for they were beginning to get restive in Berlin."
6. Berchtold to Giesl, Austrian minister in Belgrade, July 20. *Ibid.*, No. 27.
7. See Professor Schücking's reflections, quoted by *Lutz*, p. 299, note 2.
8. Immediate report by Berchtold, July 14.—Session of the

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council of ministers for common affairs, July 19. *D. A.*, first part, Nos. 19 and 26.

9. Embassy Counsellor Stolberg to Jagow, July 18. *K.*, I, No. 87. He reported a conversation he had just had with Berchtold on the subject of the ultimatum. He had just learned through Hoyos "that the conditions are such that it is impossible for any State which still retains a little dignity and pride to accept them."

10. Circular dispatch from Berchtold to the Austrian ambassadors, July 23. *D. A.*, first part, No. 61. "We cannot make the requirements whose accomplishment we demand from Serbia the subject of negotiation or compromise, since, in the relations of States which ought to live in peace and friendship, they contain fundamentally nothing that is not perfectly natural."

11. See the telegrams of July 21, 22, and 23 in *K.*, I, Nos. 93, 96, 108, 112.

12. Telegram from Jagow to the German minister in Stockholm and the German ambassador in London, July 23; to the German ambassador in Rome, July 24. *K.*, I, Nos. 123, 126, 145 —Telegram from Bronevski, Russian *chargé d'affaires*, July 22. *Int. Bez.*, No. 330.

13. In a private and confidential letter from Tschirschky to Jagow, July 11 (Annexes to the official report of the public sittings of the Reichstag Commission of inquiry into the origins of the World War, p. 119), the ambassador informed the German Secretary of State that the following conditions would be laid down: official public declaration by the King (and Order of the Day to the army) "that Serbia renounces her Pan-Serb propaganda. In addition, it will be demanded that an organization should be set up by the Austro-Hungarian Government to supervise the strict execution of this promise." On the day before (July 10), he had already telegraphed: "The demands which should be formulated *vis-à-vis* Serbia are now the main preoccupation here, and Count Berchtold says that he would be glad to know what Berlin thinks on the subject. He feels that a demand should in particular be made for the establishment in Belgrade of an Austro-Hungarian governmental organization to keep an eye on the Pan-Serbian agitation on the spot; and possibly for the dissolution of the political societies and the dismissal of some compromised Serbian officers. The time-limit fixed for the reply ought to be very short, about forty-eight hours."—*K.*, I, No. 29.

14. Jagow to Tschirschky, July 13. *K.*, I, No. 39.

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15. Circular dispatch from Zimmermann, Under-Secretary of State, to the German ambassadors in Paris, London, and St. Petersburg, July 24. *K.*, I, No. 153. "We have had no influence of any kind on the text of the Note, and we have had no more opportunity than the other Powers to take sides in any way before its publication."

16. The incident is narrated in detail by *Renouvin*, p. 62, note 2 (second edition).

17. Declarations to the Reichstag Commission of inquiry. Annex I to the official report, p. 30.

18. The Chancellor to the German ambassadors in St. Petersburg, Paris, and London, July 21. *K.*, I, No. 100.

19. Lajusan, *Nouvelles données sur l'état d'esprit des milieux officiels allemands en 1914* (*New Light on the German Official Opinion in 1914*), in *Revue d'histoire de la Guerre mondiale*, April 1926, p. 141.

20. Conrad to Berchtold, July 10. *D. A.*, first part, No. 14.

21. Jagow to Tschirschky, July 12. *K.*, I, No. 36.

22. Bethmann-Hollweg to Tschirschky, July 18. *K.*, I, No. 70.

23. See, in *D. A.*, first part, Nos. 28 and 36, Berchtold's minute instructions (July 20 and 21) to the Austrian minister in Belgrade regarding insistence upon absolute and "unreserved" submission on Serbia's part, and regarding preparations for leaving without delay after the rupture of diplomatic relations.

24. Berchtold to Merey, Austrian ambassador in Rome, July 20. *D. A.*, first part, No. 33—Tisza wrote to Tschirschky on November 5, 1914: "Before undertaking any action against Serbia we took the advice of Germany; and our *démarche* in Belgrade was made with the express encouragement of the German Government; we were informed by Berlin that the situation—daily becoming more and more dangerous for the Central Powers—was in their opinion favourable for the settlement of accounts."

CHAPTER VI

1. Telegram from Lichnowsky, July 25. *K.*, I, No. 163.—*Sidney Fay*, vol. ii, p. 286, sums up as follows the impression produced in the various countries by the ultimatum: "Everywhere, except at Berlin, its severe demands and its intransigent tone made a painful impression and caused the most serious misgivings."

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2. Telegram from Mensdorff, Austrian ambassador in London, July 24. *D. A.*, second part, No. 14.
3. Telegram from Lichnowsky, July 24. *K.*, I, No. 157.
4. Grey to Bunsen, British ambassador in Vienna, July 24. *B. D.*, No. 91.
5. Telegram from Lichnowsky, July 25. *K.*, I, No. 165.
6. Szápáry to Berchtold, July 24. *D. A.*, second part, Nos. 16 and 18.
7. Telegram from Pourtalès, July 25. *K.*, I, No. 160.—Szápáry to Berchtold, July 24. *D. A.*, second part, No. 19.
8. Communication from the Russian ambassador, and telegram from Grey to Bunsen, July 25. *B. D.*, Nos. 117 and 118.
9. Baron von Macchio, departmental head, to Berchtold, and Berchtold's reply, July 25. *D. A.*, second part, Nos. 29 and 30.
10. Telegram from Lichnowsky, July 24. *K.*, I, No. 157.
11. Jagow to Tschirschky, July 25. *K.*, I, No. 171.
12. Bronewski, the Russian *chargé d'affaires*, to Jagow, July 25. *K.*, I, No. 172.
13. Telegram from Jules Cambon, July 25. *Yellow Book*, Nos. 42 and 43.
14. Jagow to Tschirschky, July 25. *K.*, I, No. 171.
15. *Lutz*, p. 120.
16. Buchanan to Grey, July 25. *B. D.*, No. 125.
17. Jagow to the German minister in Stockholm, July 23. *K.*, I, No. 123.
18. William II's marginal notes on Jagow's telegram to the Emperor, July 23, on Lichnowsky's telegram to the Wilhelmstrasse, July 24, and on that sent by Griesinger, on the same day. *K.*, I, Nos. 121, 157, and 159.
19. To be found in *K.*, I, No. 100.
20. Annotation on a telegram from Goschen. *B. D.*, No. 249.
21. *Lutz*, p. 249.
22. Bethmann-Hollweg to Berchtold, February 10, 1913. *Gr. Pol.*, vol. xxxiv, No. 12818.
23. Bethmann-Hollweg to Lichnowsky, June 16, 1914. *K.*, I, No. 3. "I do not believe, however, that Russia is preparing for an early war against us. But she desires—and one cannot blame her for it—if a fresh outbreak in the Balkan crisis occurs, to be in a position, thanks to a considerable military armament, to adopt a stronger attitude than at the time of the last Balkan trouble."

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24. Telegram from Berchtold, July 13. *Oe. U. A.*, vol. viii, No. 10229.

25. The Imperial minister in attendance to the Wilhelmstrasse, July 14. *K.*, I, No. 80.

26. The Naval Chief of Staff to Jagow, July 20. *K.*, I, No. 82.

27. The Naval Chief of Staff *ad interim* to the Wilhelmstrasse, July 22. *K.*, I, No. 111.

28. Kanner, *Kaiserliche Katastrophenpolitik (Catastrophic Policy of the Austrian Empire)*, p. 251.

29. Jagow to the German minister in Brussels, July 29. *K.*, II, No. 376.

30. Telegram from ambassador von Schoen, July 28. *K.*, II., No. 350.

CHAPTER VII

1. The text of the reply is in the *Serb Blue Book*, No. 39, and in *D. A.*, second part, No. 47.

2. Reports from Giesl, Austrian minister in Serbia, May 30, 1914. *Oe. U. A.*, vol. viii, No. 9774.

3. Report from Giesl, June 12, 1914. *Ibid.*, No. 9844.

4. Telegram from Strandtmann, *chargé d'affaires*, July 19. *Int. Bez.*, No. 285.

5. Telegram sent by the same, July 24. *Int. Bez.*, No. 37.

6. Telegram from Hartwig, Russian minister in Belgrade, July 9. *Int. Bez.*, No. 148.

7. Telegram from Griesinger, German minister in Belgrade, to the Chancellor, July 24. *K.*, I, No. 137.

8. The details which follow are taken from the interview with Pachitch by M. Léon Savadjian, which he published in his treatise, *Les origines et les responsabilités de la guerre mondiale (The origins of and the responsibility for World War)*, published by the *Revue des Balkans*, 1933, p. 58.

9. *Lutz*, pp. 128-9.

10. *K.*, II, No. 291 (July 26).

11. These views of William II's are to be found at the end of the annotations to the text of the Serbian reply, *K.*, I, No. 271, and in his letter to Jagow, July 28, *K.*, II, No. 293.

12. The Chancellor to Tschirschky, July 28. *K.*, II, No. 323. —Minutes of the session of the Cabinet Council, July 30. "There was also ground," said Bethmann-Hollweg, "for taking

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account of the fact that the Serbian reply, except for points of detail, in fact gave satisfaction to the Austro-Hungarian *desiderata*."

13. *Fischer*, pp. 166-9.

14. The Chancellor to the German ambassador in Paris, July 16. *K.*, I, No. 200.

15. Telegram from ambassador von Schoen, July 26. *K.*, I, No. 235.

16. Von Schoen to the Wilhelmstrasse, July 27. *K.*, I, No. 252. Marginal note by the Kaiser.

17. Circular telegram from Bienvenu-Martin, French Minister for Foreign Affairs *ad interim*, July 27. *Yellow Book*, No. 62.

18. *Ibid.*

19. Berchtold to Szápáry, Austrian ambassador in St. Petersburg, July 25. *D. A.*, second part, No. 42.

20. Berchtold to Szápáry, July 27. *D. A.*, second part, No. 75.

21. Lichnowsky to the Wilhelmstrasse, July 28. *K.*, II, No. 301.

22. Marginal note by Bethmann-Hollweg on the preceding telegram from Lichnowsky.

23. *Fischer*, p. 186.

24. *Conrad*, vol. iv, p. 92.

25. Grey to Sir Francis Bertie, British ambassador in Paris, July 26. *B. D.*, No. 140.

26. Secret telegram from Sazonov to the Russian ambassadors in Paris and London, July 27. *Int. Bez.*, No. 116.

27. Goschen, British ambassador, to Grey, July 27. *B. D.*, No. 185.

28. The German Chancellor to Lichnowsky, July 27. *K.*, I, No. 248.

29. Telegram from Jules Cambon, July 27. *Yellow Book*, No. 74.

30. Szápáry to Berchtold, July 27. *D. A.*, second part, No. 73.—Pourtalès to the Wilhelmstrasse, July 26 and 27. *K.*, I, No. 238, and *K.*, II, No. 282.

31. Berchtold to Szápáry, July 28. *D. A.*, second part, No. 95.

32. Telegram from Lichnowsky to the Wilhelmstrasse, July 27. *K.*, I, No. 258.

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33. Telegram from Bethmann-Hollweg to Tschirschky, July 27. *K.*, I, No. 277.

34. Telegram from the German Chancellor to Lichnowsky, July 28. *K.*, II, No. 279.

35. Szögyény to Berchtold, July 27. *D. A.*, second part, No. 68.

36. Tschirschky to the Wilhelmstrasse, July 29. *K.*, II, No. 400.

CHAPTER VIII

1. Szögyény to Berchtold, July 25. *D. A.*, second part, No. 32.

2. Telegrams from Tschirschky, July 26 and 27. *K.*, I, Nos. 213 and 257.

3. Berchtold to Szögyény, July 27. *D. A.*, second part, No. 69.

4. *Lutz*, pp. 129-35.

5. "Remarks on the report of the Commission of the Allied and Associated Governments concerning the responsibility of the chief authors of the war," by Hans Delbrück, Albert Mendelsohn-Bartholdy, Max Montgelas, and Max Weber, transmitted to Clemenceau, president of the Peace Conference, by Brockdorff-Rantzau, in *The German White Book on responsibility for the War*, official text, series *Materialen betreffend die Friedensverhandlungen (Material Concerning the Peace Negotiations)*, Charlottenburg, 1919, p. 62.

6. *Lutz*, p. 128.

7. Report by Berchtold to the Emperor, July 27. *D. A.*, second part, No. 78. Another report by the same to the same, July 29. *Ibid.*, third part, No. 26.

8. Berchtold to the Serbian Minister for Foreign Affairs, July 28, in the morning. *D. A.*, second part, No. 97.

9. Bunsen to Grey, July 27. *B. D.*, No. 175.

10. In connection with the communication made by Vienna to Berlin of its intention to declare war the next day, *Fischer*, p. 184, says: "It was the decisive act. According to all earlier appearance, Russia would reply to it by war on Austria."

11. Berchtold to Szápáry, July 25. *D. A.*, second part, No. 42.

12. *Lutz*, p. 136.

13. *Documents sur les origines de la guerre (Documents on the Origins of the War)*, p. 4 (Publication de l'Office Impérial

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des Affaires Etrangères) (Published by the Imperial Ministry for Foreign Affairs).—The text which I have quoted in the French edition of this book is taken from the French edition of the Chancellor's report, published by the Wilhelmstrasse. It has been pointed out that this official German translation differs from the original; where the phrase appears as "ein etwaiges Kriegerisches Vorgehen," instead of "Irgend ein Kriegerisches Vorgehen."

CHAPTER IX

1. The facts and their proof are reported by the American historian Binkley, *New Light on Russia's War Guilt*, in *Current History*, January 1926, and by Dobrorolski, *Die Mobilmachung der russischen Armee*, 1914 (*The Mobilization of the Russian Army in 1914*). See also Bienvenu-Martin's circular telegram, July 26. *Yellow Book*, No. 50.

2. *Conrad*, vol. iv, p. 131. On July 26, at 12.30, at Berch-told's, he met the German ambassador, who said that, according to information furnished by the Danish minister, Russia was taking measures in the military areas along her German and Austrian frontiers. "I pointed out," says Conrad, "that this did not yet necessarily mean mobilization, but that we ought to follow Russia's measures and do the same thing, step by step."

3. Interview of Soukhomlinov with von Eggeling, the German military *attaché*, reported in ambassador Pourtalès's telegram, July 27. *K.*, I, No. 242.

4. Telegram from Pourtalès, July 27. *K.*, I, No. 242. Here is the passage from this telegram. "The Minister (for War) affirmed repeatedly that his country had a great need of peace and desired it. I gathered the impression that he was very nervous and deeply anxious. I believe their desire for peace is sincere, and that their military information is correct, in the sense that general mobilization has not been ordered, but that very extensive preparatory measures have been taken. They are obviously exerting themselves to gain time for further negotiation and continued arming. The internal situation unquestionably causes great anxiety. The dominant feature in opinion is hope in Germany and the mediation of His Majesty William II."

5. Telegram from the German military *attaché* at the Russian Court, July 29. *K.*, II, No. 344.

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6. Pourtalès, *Am Scheideweg zwischen Krieg und Frieden* (*At the Crossroads between Peace and War*), p. 32.

7. Secret telegram to the *chargé d'affaires* in Berlin, July 28. *Int. Bez.*, No. 168.

8. On this subject, see Dobrorolski's memorandum, quoted in note 1 above.

9. For what follows, see telegram from the Chancellor to Pourtalès, July 29, and telegrams from Pourtalès, same dates. *K.*, II, Nos. 342, 343, 365, 378—Szápáry to Berchtold same date. *D. A.*, third part, No. 19.

10. Telegram from Pourtalès, July 29. *K.*, II, No. 365.

11. Telegram from Bronevski, *chargé d'affaires* in Berlin, July 27. *Int. Bez.*, No. 135.—Telegram from Goschen, British ambassador in Berlin, July 27. *B. D.*, No. 185.

12. Telegram from Pourtalès, July 29. *K.*, II, No. 378.

13. *Fischer*, pp. 190–192.

14. The Kaiser to the Czar, July 28. *K.*, II, No. 335.

15. The Czar to the Kaiser, July 29. *K.*, II, No. 366.

16. The Kaiser to the Czar, July 29. *K.*, II, No. 359.

17. These details are taken from the deposition of the Chief of Staff, General Januskhevitch, at the trial of the Minister for War, Soukhomlinov, in 1917. *Revue d'histoire de la Guerre mondiale*, April 1924.

18. See Dobrorolski's memorandum, quoted in note 1, above.

19. For the details, see Paléologue, *La Russie des Tsars*, and *Schilling's Diary*.

20. *Conrad*, vol. iv, pp. 151–152.

21. *Lutz*, p. 285, and *Fischer*, "July 1914," in *Vossische Zeitung*, January 13, 1931.

22. The Czar to the Kaiser, July 31. *K.*, III, No. 487. "We are far from desiring war. So long as negotiations with Austria on the subject of Serbia continue, my troops will not commit any provocative act. I give you my solemn word for that." On August 1, the Czar telegraphed again to William II in the following terms (*K.*, III, No. 546): "I understand that you are obliged to mobilize, but I desire to receive from you the same guarantees as I have given you, namely that these measures do not mean war and that we shall continue to negotiate for the good of our countries and of universal peace, which is so dear to our hearts. Our long and tried friendship should succeed, with God's help, in avoiding bloodshed. Anxious, but confident,

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I am waiting for your reply." The Kaiser replied (K., III, No. 600) that the silence of the Russian Government about "the sole means" which, in his view, would enable war to be avoided, had constrained him to mobilize. He went on as follows: "An immediate, clear, and unequivocal reply in the affirmative from your Government is the sole means of averting illimitable disaster. Unfortunately, pending my receipt of this reply, it is impossible for me to discuss the subject of your telegram. In fact, I must beg you at once to order your troops not to commit the slightest violation of our frontier on any pretext." William II thus evaded the question raised by Nicholas upon whom the Kaiser, in accordance with his tactics, sought to throw the whole responsibility.

CHAPTER X

1. Paléologue, *La Russie des Tsars*, vol. i.—Poincaré, Chapter VII.—Telegram from the British ambassador, Buchanan, July 24. *B. D.*, No. 101.

2. Regarding his conversation with the French President, see also telegram from Buchanan, July 22. *B. D.*, No. 76.

3. Regarding this conversation, I follow Szápáry's narrative (telegram of July 21). *D. A.*, first part, No. 45.

4. The text of Sazonov's telegram is to be found in *Schilling's Diary* (German edition), Appendix I, p. 43.

5. Telegram from Pourtalès, July 24. *K.*, I, No. 203.

6. The only known testimony regarding the drafting of the *communiqué* is that of Poincaré, p. 279.

7. Telegram from Paléologue, July 25. *Yellow Book*, No. 38.

8. The text of Viviani's telegram is to be found in Poincaré, p. 307.

9. Poincaré, p. 347.

10. Poincaré, p. 373. *Yellow Book*, No. 85.

11. Huldermann, *Albert Ballin*, p. 301. "The French Government was so little desirous of war that its representatives in London were, as Ballin puts it, 'singing very small,' and did their utmost to avert disaster."

12. Telegram from Szécsen, July 28. *Oe. U. A.*, vol. viii, No. 10907.

13. Telegram from von Schoen, July 29. *K.*, II, No. 367.

14. Telegram from Szécsen, July 30. *Oe. U. A.*, vol. viii, No. 11079.

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15. Sazonov to Isvolsky, July 29. *Int. Bez.*, No. 220. "As we could not accede to Germany's request, there is nothing left for us but to accelerate our arming and contemplate the inevitable eventuality of war. Please inform the French Government to this effect, and at the same time express our sincere gratitude for the declaration which the French ambassador has made to me in its name, that we can count entirely upon France's support. In existing circumstances, this declaration is particularly valuable for us. It would be extremely desirable that Great Britain should also without delay line up with France, for it is only in this way that she can prevent a dangerous disturbance of the European equilibrium."

16. Telegram from Viviani to the French ambassadors in St. Petersburg and London, July 30. *Yellow Book*, No. 101. The original text is as follows: "As I indicated to you in my telegram of July 27, the Government of the Republic is resolved to spare no effort with a view to settling the conflict and seconding the action of the Imperial Government in the interests of general peace. At the same time, France is resolved to fulfil all the obligations of the alliance. But in the interests of general peace itself, and in view of the fact that negotiation is in progress among the Powers least directly involved, I think it would be desirable that, in any measures of precaution and defence to which she may see fit to proceed, Russia should not take at present any step which would offer Germany any pretext for general or partial mobilization of her forces."

17. Secret telegram from Isvolsky, July 30. *Int. Bez.*, No. 291.

18. Viviani's note, dated January 23, 1915, is hitherto unpublished. Here is the essential passage: "In the morning (July 31), M. Isvolsky, who had been informed during the night of the contents of M. Viviani's telegram" (this is telegram No. 101 mentioned in note 16 above), "came to see the Prime Minister again. Count Ignatieff, the Russian military *attaché*, had seen M. Messimy during the morning, and in the course of their conversation he had inquired how this reservation was to be translated into military terms. To what extent could preparatory mobilization measures be suspended in order not to give Germany the pretext which was feared? The Prime Minister recalls that M. Isvolsky showed him a document in which Count Ignatieff, in the light of his conversation with

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M. Messimy, had indicated in what sense, from the military point of view, the formula in the Prime Minister's telegram should be understood." The telegram to Paléologue of July 30, at 8.40 p.m., was published in *Poincaré*, p. 402.

19. Telegram from Paléologue, July 30. *Yellow Book*, No. 102. See the text of this document in Appuhn and Renouvin, *Introduction aux Tableaux d'histoire comparée de Guillaume II*, p. 95, where it was correctly published for the first time.

20. This is the telegram from Paléologue which figures, but incorrectly reproduced, in the *Yellow Book*, under No. 118.

CHAPTER XI

1. Telegram from Mensdorff, Austrian ambassador in London, December 22, 1912. *Oe. U. A.*, vol. v, No. 5028.

2. Telegram from Lichnowsky, December 4, 1912. *Gr. Pol.*, vol. xxxiii, No. 12481.

3. See the telegrams from Lichnowsky in *K.*, I, Nos. 5, 30, 43, 55, 62, 165, 258, 265. On June 24, 1914—that is to say, several days before the Sarajevo outrage—the German ambassador reported the following statement by Grey: "No unpublished arrangement existed between Great Britain and the *Entente* Powers. He was able to repeat the assurance which he had previously made publicly in Parliament as to that, and he was glad to be able to add that he would never do anything to cause the policy of the *Entente* to take a direction contrary to German interests. He also believed that recently this question has been considered among us more calmly. But he wanted to be quite frank with me, and had no desire to lead me astray; and he thus took advantage of the opportunity which was now offered him to tell me that, despite the foregoing facts, his relations with the other two Powers of the *Entente* were, now as before, very close, and had lost nothing of their original solidarity. Upon all important questions, he kept in permanent contact with the Governments of these Powers."

On July 14 Lichnowsky formulated the following view about the state of British public opinion: "It will be difficult to brand the whole Serbian nation as malefactors and murderers, and deprive it, as the *Lokalanzeiger* has exerted itself to do, of the sympathy of civilized Europe. . . . Undoubtedly stern and ruthless proceedings against the assassins would be

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understood here, but I fear that public opinion will not be on the side of anyone who attempts to exploit this occasion in the political sphere and make it a point of departure for military measures against a criminal people. In this case the present Cabinet, already weakened by the internal crisis, would scarcely be strong enough to maintain a policy in contradiction not only with the moral feeling of the nation, but also with the particular tendencies of the (Liberal) party."

July 16: "I again express the view that, if military measures are taken against Serbia, all public opinion will take sides against Austria-Hungary."

July 27: "The impression is steadily growing here—and I gathered this clearly from my conversation with Sir Edward Grey—that the whole Serbian question is becoming a question of preponderance between the Triple Alliance and the Triple *Entente*. In consequence, if Austria's intention to take advantage of present circumstances in order to crush Serbia (as Sir Edward Grey puts it) were manifested still more clearly, Great Britain would, I am certain, put herself unreservedly alongside France and Russia, in order to show that she is not disposed to tolerate the moral or military defeat of her group. If in these conditions it comes to war, we shall have Great Britain against us, for the feeling that, in view of the Serbian Government's conciliatory spirit, war might easily have been avoided will be a decisive factor in the attitude of the British Government."

4. Report from von Schoen, *chargé d'affaires*, July 18. K., IV, Annex IV, No. 2.

5. Grey to Buchanan, July 25. B. D., No. 132.

6. Telegram from Lichnowsky, July 8. K., I, No. 30.

7. Telegram from Lichnowsky, July 25. K., I, No. 180.

8. Telegram from Lichnowsky, July 27. K., I, No. 265.—Telegram from Mensdorff to Berchtold, July 28. D. A., second part, No. 91. "I believe that Grey would like to collaborate with Germany with a pacific object. If he suspected that Germany were 'pushing' us, or, generally speaking, that it were desired to provoke a war with Russia, his line of action would change considerably, and he would, I fear, range himself all the more decisively on the Russian side."

9. Huldermann, *Albert Ballin*, p. 302.

10. Letter from Prince Henry of Prussia to William II, July 28. K., II, No. 374.

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11. *Fischer*, pp. 202-3.
12. *Lutz*, p. 188.
13. Telegram from Buchanan, July 24: notes by Crowe.
B. D., No. 101.

CHAPTER XII

1. Telegram from Goschen, July 29. *B. D.*, No. 293.—Bethmann-Hollweg's conversation with Goschen, July 29. *K.*, II, No. 373.
2. Telegram from Jagow, July 29. *K.*, II, No. 375. The text of the ultimatum is to be found in *ibid.*, No. 376.
3. *Fischer*, p. 204.
4. *Lutz*, p. 210.
5. Autograph letter from the Czar to Sazonov, July 27. *Livre Noir*, vol. ii, p. 283.—See also the telegram from the German military *attaché* at the Russian Court, July 28. *K.*, II, No. 337.
6. William II's marginal annotations on the preceding telegram. *K.*, II, No. 337.
7. Bethmann-Hollweg to Pourtalès, July 29. *K.*, II, No. 391.
8. *Lutz*, p. 211.
9. Telegram from the German Chancellor to Tschirschky, July 29. *K.*, II, No. 385.
10. Telegram from Rodd, British ambassador in Rome, July 28. *B. D.*, No. 231.—Telegram from Lichnowsky, July 29. *K.*, II, No. 357.
11. Telegram from Lichnowsky, July 29. *K.*, II, No. 368.
12. Telegram from Bethmann-Hollweg to Tschirschky, July 30. *K.*, II, No. 396.—The German Chancellor to Jagow, July 29. *K.*, II, No. 340.
13. Berchtold's conversation with the Russian ambassador, July 29. *D. A.*, third part, No. 23.—Telegram from Tschirschky, July 30. *K.*, II, No. 433.—Telegram from Berchtold to Szápáry, July 30. *D. A.*, third part, No. 44.
14. Telegram from Pourtalès, July 30. *K.*, II, No. 412.—Telegram from Lichnowsky, July 29. *K.*, II, No. 357.—Grey to Goschen, July 29. *B. D.*, No. 284.
15. Telegram from Pourtalès, July 30. *K.*, II, Nos. 401 and 412.
16. Telegram from the German Chancellor to Tschirschky, July 29. *K.*, II, No. 361.

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17. *Lutz*, p. 180.
18. Telegram from Pourtalès, July 30. *K.*, II, No. 421.
19. Telegram from Swerbéev, Russian ambassador in Berlin, July 30. *Int. Bez.*, No. 305.
20. William II to Jagow, July 28. *K.*, II, No. 293.
21. Bethmann-Hollweg to Tschirschky, July 28. *K.*, II, No. 323.
22. Communication by the German ambassador, July 29. *D. A.*, third part, No. 24.
23. *Lutz*, p. 212.
24. Telegram from Tschirschky, July 29. *K.*, II, No. 388.
25. *Fischer*, pp. 196-7.
26. The Austro-Hungarian embassy to the Wilhelmstrasse, July 30. *K.*, II, No. 428.
27. *Fischer*, p. 187.
28. Telegram from Lichnowsky, July 29. *K.*, II, No. 368.
29. Bethmann-Hollweg to Tschirschky, July 30. *K.*, II, No. 395.
30. The same to the same, July 30. *K.*, II, No. 396.
31. William II's marginal notes on telegram from Lichnowsky, July 29. *K.*, II, No. 368.
32. William II to Francis Joseph, July 30. *K.*, II, No. 437.
33. Bethmann-Hollweg to Tschirschky, July 30. *K.*, II, No. 441.
34. Telegram from Lichnowsky, July 30. *K.*, II, No. 447.
35. Telegram from Lichnowsky, July 30. *K.*, II, No. 435.
36. Telegram from Bethmann-Hollweg, July 30. *K.*, II, No. 441.
37. Telegram from Pourtalès, July 30. *K.*, II, No. 449.
38. Note from the Austrian embassy in Berlin, July 30. *K.*, II, No. 427.
39. Telegrams from Bethmann-Hollweg to Tschirschky, July 30. *K.*, II, Nos. 450 and 464.

CHAPTER XIII

1. The German Great General Staff to the Chancellor, *K.*, II, No. 349.
2. See the reports by Lerchenfeld, Bavarian minister, and von Wenniger, Bavarian military *attaché*, in Berlin, July 29 and 31, quoted by *Lutz*, pp. 193-4.

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3. Note from the Austro-Hungarian embassy in Berlin, July 29. *K.*, II, No. 352.
4. Zwehl, *Erich von Falkenhayn*, p. 57.
5. Minutes of the session of the Prussian ministry, July 30. *K.*, II, No. 456.
6. Moltke's telegrams are given by *Conrad*, vol. iv, p. 152.
7. *Lutz*, pp. 232-3.
8. *Conrad*, vol. iii, p. 238, and vol. iv, p. 150.
9. *Conrad*, vol. iv, p. 151.
10. *Fischer*, p. 230.
11. For the details, see *Conrad*, vol. iv, pp. 152-3.
12. Note from the Political Department of the Wilhelmstrasse, July 31, morning. *K.*, II, No. 468.
13. Berchtold to Szögyény, July 31. *D. A.*, third part, No. 50.
14. The minutes are to be found in *D. A.*, third part, No. 79.
15. The German Chancellor to Tschirschky, July 31, 1.45 p.m. *K.*, II, No. 479.
16. The German Chancellor to Lichnowsky, July 31, 3.10 p.m. *K.*, III, No. 488.
17. The German Chancellor to Lichnowsky, July 31. *K.*, III, No. 529. "A Russian army mobilized on our frontier, while we have not mobilized, is a vital danger for us even without 'provocative action.' The provocation of which Russia has been guilty, in mobilizing against us at a moment when at her request we were acting as mediators in Vienna, is moreover so intense that no German could understand our failing to reply to it by strong measures."

CHAPTER XIV

1. *Fischer*, pp. 197 and 231. See also *Lutz's* reflections, p. 12.
2. *Vorwärts's* articles have been analysed and almost all translated by La Chesnais, *Le groupe socialiste du Reichstag et la déclaration de guerre* (*The Socialist Group in the Reichstag and the Declaration of War*) (1915); but I have used the originals. See also Royer, *La social-démocratie allemande et austro-hongroise et les socialistes belges* (*The German and Austro-Hungarian Social-Democracy and the Belgian Socialists*) (1915). I have studied the question more deeply, in the light of documents which these two authors had not at their disposal, in an article entitled *Les socialistes allemands pendant la crise de juillet 1914*

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(*The German Socialists during the Crisis of July 1914*), published in *Revue d'histoire de la Guerre mondiale*, October number, 1933. For the present narrative I have borrowed a few passages or expressions from this article.

3. The text of the manifesto (*Aufruf!*), of which La Chesnais gives a translation, p. 10, is to be found in German in *Vorwärts* of July 25 (*Extra-Ausgabe*) and in the work devoted by Ernst Haase to his father under the title *Hugo Haase, Sein Leben und Wirken (His Life and Work)*, p. 24.

4. Regarding the meeting of the International Executive in Brussels, see the texts in La Chesnais, p. 24, and Scheidemann, *Memoiren eines Sozialdemokraten (Memoirs of a Social Democrat)*, vol. i, p. 237.

5. Quoted by Andler, *Le socialisme impérialiste allemand*, p. III.

6. Conversation with Bebel in von Eckardstein, *Die Isolierung Deutschlands*, p. 136 (vol. iii of *Lebenserinnerungen*) (*Memories of My Life*).

7 *Hugo Haase, Sein Leben und Wirken*, p. 25.

8. Regarding the conversation between the Chancellor and Südekum and Südekum's letter, see Bergstraesser (Ludwig), *Die preussische Wahlrechtfrage im Kriege und die Entstehung der Osterbotschaft 1917 (The Question of Prussian Suffrage during the War and the Origin of the Message of Easter 1917)*, pp. 2-3. This work was published in 1929.

9. The minutes of the Council's session are to be found in *K.*, II, 456.

10. Report by Count Montgelas, quoted in *Zehn Jahre Sozialdemokratie (Ten Years of Social Democracy)*, p. 9 (published by the German Communist Party, 1924).—Umbreit, *Die deutschen Gewerkschaften im Kriege (The German Trade-unions during the War)*, p. 158, in *Der Krieg und die Arbeits-Verhältnisse (The War and Working Conditions)*, published in 1928 in the German series on the economic and social history of the war (Carnegie Endowment).

11. Scheidemann, *Memoiren eines Sozialdemokraten*, pp. 239-41.

12. The documents relating to Hermann Müller's journey to Paris are to be found in La Chesnais, p. 53 and Appendix I, and in Scheidemann, p. 252.

13. La Chesnais, p. 35, gives the translation of the manifesto

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and of the article in *Vorwärts* (August 1) on "Europe's Hour of Fate," which ended as follows: "Nevertheless, if this horror comes true, if a war of peoples drowns Europe in a sea of blood, one thing is certain: Social Democracy bears no responsibility whatever for coming events."

14. *Hugo Haase*, p. 27. See also La Chesnais, pp. 63-4.

15. The declaration is published in full in French translation by La Chesnais, p. 65.

16. Bergstraesser, p. 3.

17. Haenisch (Konrad), *Die deutsche Sozialdemokratie in und nach dem Weltkriege* (*German Social Democracy in and after the World War*), gives a number of quotations, mostly taken from local papers such as *Münchener Post*, *Rheinische Zeitung*, *Volksblatt für Halle*, *Chemnitzer Volkstimme*, *Hamburger Echo*, etc.

18. Haenisch, p. 15.

19. William II's note on the Czar's telegram, July 29. K., II, No. 332.

CHAPTER XV

1. The German Chancellor to Pourtalès, July 31. K., III, No. 490.

2. The German Chancellor to von Schoen, July 31. K., III, No. 491.

3. Von Schoen, *Erlebtes* (*My Life*), pp. 176, 178, 191.

4. Viviani to Paléologue, July 31. *Yellow Book*, No. 117.

5. Jagow to Pourtalès, August 1. K., III, No. 542.

6. Details of the facts and the essential texts are given faithfully in *Poincaré*, pp. 424-6, 458, 479, 482-3.

7. The French ambassador to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, August 3. K., III, No. 722.—Viviani to Jules Cambon, August 2. *Yellow Book*, No. 139.

8. Letter handed by von Schoen to Viviani, August 3, 6.45 p.m. *Yellow Book*, No. 147.—Jagow to the German ambassador in Rome, August 2. K., III, No. 664.

9. The Prussian minister in Munich to the German Chancellor, August 2. K., IV, No. 758.

10. Bertie, British ambassador in Paris, to Grey, July 31. B. D., No. 382.—The German minister in Belgium to the Wilhelmstrasse, August 1. K., III, No. 584.

11. A. de Bassompierre, *La nuit du 2 au 3 août 1914 au*

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ministère des affaires étrangères de Belgique, in *Revue des Deux Mondes*, February 15, 1916.

12. Eyschen, Minister of State of Luxembourg, to Jagow, August 1. *K.*, III, Nos. 602, 637.—The German minister in Luxembourg to the Wilhelmstrasse, August 2. *Ibid.*, No. 619.—The Grand Duchess of Luxembourg to the Kaiser, August 2.—*Ibid.*, No. 638.—The German Chancellor to Eyschen, Minister of State, August 2. *Ibid.*, No. 640.—The Chancellor to the German ambassador in Paris, August 2. *Ibid.*, No. 642.—Jagow to Eyschen, August 2. *Ibid.*, No. 649.

13. Jagow to the German minister in Brussels, July 30. *K.*, III, No. 648.

14. Jagow to the German minister in Brussels, July 29. *K.*, II, Nos. 375 and 376. The same to the same, August 2. *K.*, III, No. 682. *Belgian Grey Book*, I, No. 19.

15. Proclamation by General von Emmich "To the Belgian People," on view in the Musée de la Guerre (Château de Vincennes).

16. The German minister in Belgium to the Wilhelmstrasse, August 3. *K.*, III, No. 709; *K.*, IV, No. 779.—The King of the Belgians to the Kaiser, August 4. *Ibid.*, No. 837.

17. Jagow to the German minister in Belgium, August 3. *K.*, IV, No. 791.

18. The German Chancellor to Lichnowsky, August 3. *K.*, IV, No. 790.

19. William II's note on telegram from the German minister in Bucharest to the Wilhelmstrasse, August 4. *K.*, IV, No. 811.

CHAPTER XVI

1. This was the expression employed by Bethmann-Hollweg at the 27 session of the Bundesrath (Council of the Federal States), held August 1. *K.*, III, No. 553.

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